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SIX LECTURES

ON

POPERY;

DELIVERED IN

KING STREET CHAPEL, MAIDSTONE.

BY WILLIAM GROSER.

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PREFACE.

SOME who heard the following Lectures having expressed a wish to peruse them, and an opinion that they might be interesting to others, the author thought there could be no impropriety on his part in committing them to the press. He is aware that works on the subject are in existence, with which his little volume cannot pretend to compete. But if local circumstances or personal attachment induce any to read these pages, who would not examine more learned and voluminous treatises, the result may be beneficial to themselves and to others.

He has not however happened to meet with anything quite similar in its plan to the discourses he now presents to public inspection. His object in composing them was not the conversion of Papists to the Protestant faith, or the protection

of Protestants from the immediate effects of Popish Rhetoric : but the instruction of persons whose acquaintance with the tenets of the Church of Rome was but slender, and who were in little danger of embracing its errors. Correct ideas of the doctrine, the practices, and the genius of the Romish Church might, he conceived, be very advantageous to some whose attention had never been directed to these topics ; they might excite emotions of gratitude to God, suggest cautions respecting kindred evils, and intimate the course which should be adopted towards the adherents of Popery. He has perceived with great regret that persons of eminent attainments in literature, and extensive general knowledge, have very inadequate views of the points at issue between Roman Catholic advocates and consistent Protestants. He has observed that the attention of many has been directed to the flagrant abuses of the system, rather than to its inherent principles. When asked their objections to the Romish Church, they have referred to practices which, though generally observed by its votaries, are not, as they would quickly be told by a dexterous opponent, articles of faith of indispensable obligation. They have paid attention to accidental symptoms of the disease rather than to the causes from

which those symptoms have arisen. He has thought therefore that something rather more systematic in its form than he has hitherto met with, might be read with advantage.

Nearly the whole of this course had been delivered before the writer saw Mr. Fletcher's "Lectures on the Principles and Institutions of the Roman Catholic Religion." Knowing the repute in which they were held by men of undoubted judgment, he thought it proper to procure them before he decided on the publication of this volume, and to examine how far the plan pursued in them resembled his own. Having looked into them since, he begs to add his humble suffrage to their excellence, and to recommend them to the perusal of any of his friends who may wish to see an elaborate refutation of Popish arguments. If he mistake not, however, they will be read with greater advantage by many persons after they have acquired the information the present volume affords, than if entered upon without previous acquaintance with any book of a more elementary character. Delivered originally in a part of the country where Roman Catholics are peculiarly numerous, and where their efforts to proselyte were very diligent, they imply more knowledge of what

Popery is, than the writer of the following sheets could presume his hearers to possess, or than is possessed by the mass of Protestants in most of our English counties.

The elegant "Summary of the Principles and History of Popery" by Mr. John Birt, of Manchester, the author read with pleasure on its first appearance. But as its illustrations are chiefly historical, it does not quite obviate one prejudice in favour of the Church of Rome, which appears to be now very prevalent. Many suppose that Popery is materially improved, that its dangerous qualities have subsided, that its errors are diminished, and that its further approximation to the standard of excellence may be reasonably expected. While Mr. Birt's volume displays very comprehensive acquaintance with the subject on which it treats, and great fertility of thought, it does not perhaps supersede a publication which appeals to *modern* advocates of the Catholic system.

A work entitled "The Protestant," by Mr. Mac Gavin of Glasgow, contains a large mass of information respecting almost every thing connected with the Romish Church. But as it first issued from the press in a periodical form, grew out of existing circumstances, and occupies four

octavo volumes, no comparison can be instituted between it and a course of six Lectures.

It will give the writer great pleasure should he know that any are induced by the perusal of these discourses, to study the character and operations of Popery, in the records of past centuries. And as some into whose hands these lines will fall may need direction to suitable works for this purpose, the intelligent reader will pardon the seeming arrogance of mentioning to him books of established reputation. In Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," five volumes, octavo, the inquirer will find ample details of the principal events, controversies, sects, and parties, in the first seventeen centuries; in which reference to the Church of Rome occupies a principal place. In Milner's "History of the Church of Christ," six volumes, octavo, there is less about Popery but more about its opponents, particularly those who distinguished themselves by their attachment to evangelical truth, and the Reformers of the sixteenth century. No Ecclesiastical Historian has however in the view of the writer, exhibited so much judgment in the selection of his materials, perspicuity of narration, and consistency of religious sentiment, as Mr. William Jones; whose "History

of the Christian Church," comprised in two octavo volumes, embodying the interesting account of the Waldenses and Albigenses, has acquired great and deserved celebrity. The first volume of Mr. Ivimey's "History of the English Baptists," contains also much curious and valuable information respecting some of the most strenuous opponents of Popery in the dark ages. But no work with which the author is acquainted gives such an extensive and learned view of the Rise and Progress of Papal Ascendancy, as Dr. George Campbell's "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History:" a book which every man who wishes to understand the gradual encroachments of ambition on the Church of Christ, and the injuries it has produced, should diligently study.

Respecting the manner in which the following thoughts are exhibited to the reader's attention, the writer has only to say, that some inaccuracies of expression which he has observed in the earlier sheets, would have been avoided, and some deficiencies which he has noticed would have been supplied, had not the general engagements of the pastoral office prevented his giving himself entirely to the work, and the desire of some of his friends

to possess it as soon as possible, prohibited delay. He has, however, been scrupulously careful not to advance any important statements on doubtful authority ; and he hopes that he shall not be found to have sacrificed either truth or candour to a cause which certainly needs not the immolation of either. Such as they are, he now commits these Lectures to the reader, conscious that the subjects to which they refer are important ; and that they have been discussed under the influence of an honest desire to represent them faithfully and to advance the interests of primitive Christianity. But should any one after an attentive perusal consider them unsatisfactory, it may be consolatory to him to remember, that whatever may be the defects of the work, the preface points an inquirer to ample sources of information.

Maidstone, 6th, May, 1825.

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LECTURES ON POPERY.



LECTURE I.

ON ITS LEADING PRINCIPLES.



“ That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God; or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”—2 *Thess.* ii. 3, 4.



IT may have excited some surprise, that I who habitually refrain from even mentioning in the Pulpit, the names of the various sects into which the Christian world is divided; and who conscientiously avoid the use of hostile language in reference to any class of the professed followers of the Redeemer, should have announced a series of discourses which wear a controversial aspect. A little reflection will, however, convince any

discriminative mind, that the silence respecting the opinions and arguments of others, which is generally expedient, may in particular circumstances be injurious to the cause of truth and righteousness. And there appears to me to be a very marked distinction between the case of the church of Rome, and that of all other Christian churches. In common with other Protestants, I believe, that the system which for the sake of giving it a compendious and characteristic name we denominate Popery, is a departure, and a gross departure from the faith of Jesus Christ;—that this corruption was clearly predicted in the Apostolic writings;—and that, therefore, its existence is a confirmation of the truth of Christianity, as showing the correctness of New Testament prophecy. And I conceive, that as it was so evidently foreknown, foretold, and yet permitted to arise, its existence must have been designed to answer some beneficial purposes, and its history must be adapted to give some salutary lessons to the disciples of our Lord, in these latter ages of the world. But how are we to derive these benefits, unless we are acquainted with its nature, and its progress? It is necessary that we should ascertain what its principles are, and in what its peculiarities con-

sist, that we should know in what manner it arose, and what effects it produces, or we shall neither discern the correspondence between the prediction and the event, nor reap those advantages from its sad example, which that example might afford. It was not a grateful exercise to the Apostle Paul, to record and publish the murmurings, the rebellions, and the idolatries of his ancestors in the wilderness; but, as these things "happened to them for ensamples," it was proper that they should be written for the admonition of those who might live in after times; and, therefore, he did not wish his Corinthian brethren to be ignorant of them.

At the present moment, a variety of circumstances combine to excite public attention very powerfully to the Romish Church. It was said, nearly three years ago, by one who possesses more than ordinary penetration, and whose eloquence enables him to embody his thoughts in the most impressive language, "Popery, and the principles of Protestantism, are again grappling. His Holiness has trembled on his papal throne, at the combined and unprecedented exertions of Protestants, to disseminate Bibles and to establish schools. His old auxiliaries, the Jesuits, have been called to his aid, and actively

employed ; bulls, and recripts have been issued, the Romish Clergy have been diligent, and in many cases violent in their opposition ; but still the stream of divine knowledge proceeds, and widens as it goes.”* What was then said with propriety, may now be repeated with yet more evident truth. Public disputations have been held in Ireland within the last three months, between Protestant ministers on the one side, and on the other, some of the leading Romish Clergy, in one instance, at least, with the Pope’s Legate for Ireland at their head ; in which the unabated hostility of the Priests to the free circulation of the Scriptures has been openly avowed. Certain prophecies, or interpretations of prophecy, currently received among the Catholics of that island, have led them to expect for many years, that in 1825, the year on which we have now entered, something extraordinary will take place, which will prove fatal to the Protestant cause. Many of the Protestants in Ireland are in a state of alarm, anticipating justly or unjustly, some terrible convulsion. On the Continent of Europe, new and vigorous efforts have recently been made to stifle the spirit of religious inquiry,

* “ A Discourse on the Signs of the Times, by Benjamin Godwin.”

to augment the influence of the priesthood, and to enforce the dictates of the Papal See. A reaction has taken place in some countries where the power of Rome had been almost destroyed. In these circumstances, it seems to me peculiarly desirable that we should have an accurate knowledge of the principles of Popery itself.

It is to the *principles* of Popery, that I have to ask your attention this evening. Some of its practices of which you have heard, and which you regard as the most obtrusive parts of the system, I hope to unfold on subsequent occasions. But these all naturally arise from what may be termed its fundamental doctrines. It is necessary to understand these, in order to have a clear and comprehensive view of its genius and tendency; to these, therefore, I lead your thoughts, in the first instance.

You will not, however, expect me to treat of those doctrines held by the church of Rome in common with the great body of Christians in this land, and in common with ourselves. It is but just to say, that there is much that is truly evangelical retained in its creed, and incorporated with its services. It adheres to the scriptural doctrine of the Unity of God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. It teaches that the only begotten of the Father assumed our nature, laid

down his life as an atoning sacrifice on the cross, and rose from the dead to intercede and reign in heaven. It recognizes the existence and operations of the Holy Spirit; it acknowledges the future resurrection of the dead, the definitive authority of the judgment seat of Christ, and the perpetual happiness of the servants of God in his immediate presence. But it is not on the points on which we cordially agree with it,—it is not on the points on which it differs from Pagans, Mahometans, Infidels, or Jews, that I intend now to address you; but on the leading principles which distinguish it from other Christian churches.

These appear to me to be three; the first, *the insufficiency of the Scriptures to be the Christian rule of faith and practice*;—the second, *the right of the Romish Clergy to supply the deficiency, by authoritatively fixing the doctrines to be believed, and the precepts to be observed*;—and the third, *the Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, over all other ministers, and over all Christian people*. I believe, I should have the concurrence of every well informed Catholic, in saying that these are the distinctive features of his system. If these principles can be established our Protestantism must fall. If any one of them could be proved our cause would be endangered. From these,

all the subordinate parts naturally proceed, and by reference to these, every one of them may be justified.

The first principle—the basis of all the rest—is, that *the Scriptures are insufficient to be the Christian rule of faith and practice.* On this, I venture to affirm, the whole controversy turns. We adhere, you are aware, to the maxim that “the Bible, and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants.” The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, we believe, were given by divine inspiration, and possess divine authority. Their statements we consider universally true, and their decisions inviolably binding. Thence we derive our belief of those doctrines, on which our hopes for eternity are built. The compassionate love of the Father in giving his Son for our redemption; the ability of Jesus Christ to save to the uttermost, and his promptness to receive every returning sinner; the gift of the Holy Spirit to them that ask, and the privileges granted to real believers; the whole of that glorious system which constitutes the foundation of our spiritual peace, and our grateful exertions, we receive solely on the testimony of the sacred record. So sufficient do we consider the written word of God, that we hesitate not to affirm, that

he who studies it with a humble, docile heart, earnestly requesting the Father of lights to give him a correct perception of its meaning, will not materially err; but will learn all that is necessary, to teach him to glorify God on earth, and to guide him to heaven. We do not say, that every part of the holy volume is equally plain; that every man who reads it, is qualified to expound it to others; or that there are no mysterious portions concerning which the most penetrating and judicious divine would confess, that after all his researches, he is unable to understand them. But we do say, that “the law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul,” and that “the testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple.” We do say, that the injunction to “search the scriptures” of the Old Testament was given by Jesus Christ to the Jews; that the determination of the Bereans, to examine the Apostle’s testimony by the light of those sacred writings they previously possessed, called forth commendation from an inspired historian; and that the Epistles in general were directed, not to individuals who had made extraordinary proficiency in Christian knowledge, but to the churches at large, and intended for the perusal of “all the holy brethren.” To every

inquirer, therefore, we present the incomparable volume. This, we say to him, is the statute book of heaven. This is the revelation which God himself has given. Here is unmingled truth; read it with reverence and humility of heart. Avail yourself of every aid within your reach, which may assist you to understand its meaning, and discern its beauties. If you have opportunity to do so, peruse those books which are adapted to illustrate its contents. Listen with deference to the opinions of the learned and the pious. But remember the ultimate decision rests with yourself: to God you are responsible for your conduct, and for the use you make of the "lamp" he has provided for your "feet;"—that responsibility you cannot transfer to another. "Every man shall bear his own burden." "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." If any man should claim "dominion over your faith," say to him boldly, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." *

* Romans xiv. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 15.

Widely different is the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Its advocates admit that the scriptures are inspired, and that divine authority attaches to their contents ; but still deny that they are a *sufficient* rule. Traditions handed down from the times of the Apostles, but never written, are, they contend, of equal authority with the sacred records, and equally necessary to a complete exhibition of the religion of Jesus Christ. And even with the scriptures in your hand, and a knowledge of tradition to assist you, according to their tenets, you are still incompetent to judge for yourself what you ought to believe, or how you ought to act. You must be guided by the decisions of *the church* ; the church being constituted by Christ the living interpreter of scripture, and the authoritative judge of all opinions and practices.

Controvertists are very apt to misrepresent the views of their opponents, even when they have no intention of doing so, simply because they do not fully understand the meaning of those from whom they differ. I will, therefore, as this is the most important point in our whole investigation, lay before you evidence, that the representation I am now giving of Catholic doctrine, is quite correct. I will read you the language of a Bi-

shop, a man of extensive learning and great circumspection, whose defence of the Church of Rome is regarded by English Catholics, as pre-eminent in merit, unanswered, and unanswerable. The Reverend Doctor Milner, the Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District of England, at the present time,—in his work intitled “The End of Religious Controversy,” justly remarks, that on the determination of the question respecting *the right rule of faith*, every other depends ; and expresses his views of the subject in the following language.

“ Among serious Christians, who profess to
“ make the discovery and practice of religion,
“ their first and earnest care, three different methods or rules have been adopted for this purpose. The first consists in a supposed *private*
“ *Inspiration*, or an immediate light and motion
“ of God’s Spirit, communicated to the individual.
“ This was the rule of faith and conduct, formerly
“ professed by the Montanists, the Anabaptists,
“ the Family of Love, and is now professed by
“ the Quakers, the Moravians, and different
“ classes of the Methodists. The second of these
“ rules, is the *written word of God*, or THE
“ BIBLE, *according as it is understood by each*
“ *particular reader or hearer of it*. This is the
“ professed rule of the more regular sects of Pro-

“testants, such as the Lutherans, the Calvinists,
 “the Socinians, the Church of England-men.
 “The third rule is **THE WORD OF GOD**, *at large*,
 “*whether written in the Bible, or handed down*
 “*from the Apostles in continued succession by the*
 “*Catholic Church; and as it is understood and*
 “*explained by this church.* To speak more ac-
 “curately, beside their *Rule of Faith*, which is
 “*Scripture and Tradition*, Catholics acknowledge
 “an unerring judge of controversy, or sure guide
 “in all matters relating to salvation: namely,
 “**THE CHURCH.**”*

In defence of this *Rule*, the learned Bishop argues in a very ingenious way, and at considerable length; but in my apprehension, in a manner quite inconclusive; not certainly for want of acuteness or diversified information in the advocate, but solely through the badness of his cause. To set before you his arguments at length, would be the work, not of one discourse, but of many; accept a summary of them in his own words.

“I have now, dear Sir, fully proved, what I
 “undertook to prove; that the Rule of Faith pro-
 “fessed by rational Protestants, that of *Scripture*
 “*as interpreted by each person's private judg-*

* “The End of Religious Controversy, by the Rev. J. M. D.D. F. S. A.” p. 41, 42.

“ *ment*, is no less fallacious than the Rule of Fa-
“ natics, who imagine themselves to be directed
“ by an individual, private inspiration. I have
“ shown that this rule is evidently unserviceable
“ to infinitely the greater part of mankind ; that
“ it is liable to lead mén into error, and that it
“ has actually led vast numbers of them into end-
“ less errors and shocking impieties. The proof
“ of these points was sufficient, according to the
“ principles I laid down at the beginning of our
“ controversy, to disprove the rule itself: but I
“ have moreover demonstrated, that our Divine
“ Master, Christ, did not establish this rule, nor
“ his Apostles follow it ;—that the Protestant
“ Churches, and that of England in particular, were
“ not founded according to this rule ;—that indivi-
“ dual Protestants have not been guided by it in
“ the choice of their religion ;—and finally that
“ the adoption of it leads to uncertainty and uneasi-
“ ness of mind in life, and more particularly at the
“ hour of death. On the other hand, I have shewn
“ that the Catholic rule, that of the entire word of
“ God, unwritten as well as written, together with
“ the authority of the living pastors of the Church
“ in explaining it, was appointed by Christ ;—was
“ followed by the Apostles ;—was maintained by
“ the Holy Fathers ;—has been resorted to from
“ necessity, in both particulars, by the Protestant

“ congregations, though with the worst success,
“ from the impossibility of uniting private judge-
“ ment with it :—that tradition lays a firm ground
“ for divine faith in scripture ;—that these two
“ united together as one rule, and each bearing
“ testimony to the living, speaking, authority of
“ the Church in expounding that rule, this Church
“ is preserved in peace and union, through all ages
“ and nations : and in short that Catholics, by ad-
“ hering to this rule and authority, live and die in
“ peace and security, as far as regards the truth
“ of their religion.”*

How important this rule of faith is to the Catholic cause, will appear, if you consider that it furnishes an answer to all objections drawn from scripture, against any sentiment, or any practice. Once admit it, and the controversy is ended. Its universal applicability immediately neutralizes objections even against itself. This great convenience belonging to his ponderous shield the Vicar Apostolic illustrates well: for though he attempts to explain away the texts most evidently hostile to his system, he discreetly provides, in case of imminent danger, this never failing refuge. “ Before I enter on the discussion of any
“ part of scripture, with you or your friends, I am
“ bound, dear Sir, in conformity with my rule of

* End of Controversy, p. 103, 104.

“ faith, as explained by the Fathers, and particu-
“ larly by Tertullian, to protest against your and
“ their right to argue from scripture ; and of course
“ must deny that there is any necessity of my re-
“ plying to any objections which you may draw
“ from it. For I have reminded you that that, no
“ prophecy of scripture is of any private *interpre-*
“ *tation* ; and I have proved to you that the whole
“ right to the scriptures belongs to the Church.
“ She has preserved them ; she vouches for them,
“ and she alone by confronting the several pas-
“ sages with each other, and with tradition,
“ authoritatively explains them. Hence it is im-
“ possible that the real sense of scripture should
“ ever be against her and her doctrine ; and hence,
“ of course, I might quash every objection which
“ you can draw from any passage in it by this
“ short reply ; *The Church understands the pas-*
“ *sage differently from you ; therefore you mis-*
“ *take its meaning*”*

If then you were to enter into the church of Rome, you must abjure your right to interpret for yourself the plainest sentence in the book of God. You may be a man of extensive attainments and patient research ; biblical studies may have engaged your attention half a century ; the original languages in which the Scriptures were

* End of Controversy, p. 106.

written may be as familiar to you as your own: still, according to this doctrine, you must not form an independent opinion respecting one article of faith. Your guide is the decision of your priest; he is your oracle: and if you err under his direction, the fault is his. Has *he* a right then to examine for himself? No more than you have!—for every article of his creed he is responsible to his superior. Has that superior the privilege of thinking for himself? Far from it! Even his Holiness with all his lofty pretensions, by the exercise of private judgment would become a heretic.* *He* also must decide according to previous decisions. The decrees of councils and the acknowledged fragments of antiquity, bind him as firmly as they bind the most illiterate peasant. Were he convinced that some page of the inspired writings pointedly condemns a tenet which has obtained the sanction of former ages, his perception of the fact would be unavailing; all his representations would be met by the ready and invincible rejoinder, “The Church

* *Heresy* has been attributed to several Popes by Synods and Councils. Some have been deposed. John XXII was threatened, according to the testimony of Cardinal d’Ailly, that if he did not retract some of his opinions he should be burnt as a heretic: the Pontiff renounced his peculiarities. See “Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, by George Campbell, D.D.”—Lecture 14.

understands the passage differently from you ; therefore you mistake its meaning." Thus, return from error to truth is rendered hopeless ; a mistake once made becomes permanent : it is part of a system which must support its character of unchanging uniformity. The word of God is made "of none effect," through human tradition. The key of knowledge is taken from the people, and cast into the Tiber.

Who could have supposed, had there not been evidence to prove it, that such a system should profess accordance with that book, in which conformity to the written word is represented as the test by which the spirits of the prophets should be tried ; a book which says, "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them !" * Who could have imagined that such should be the doctrine of a church, which acknowledges the authority of that epistle in which we read, that all scripture given by inspiration of God, "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works !" † Can this—some of you are, it is probable, ready to ask—can this

* Isaiah viii. 20.

† 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

be the religion of one hundred and fifty millions of the human race? Is this the creed of the enlightened Catholics of the nineteenth century? Are not these exploded tenets, found only among the writers of the middle ages? Alas! this is the doctrine of the whole Romish Church, maintained as tenaciously as ever, and sanctioned by the highest authorities. It is a melancholy fact that the governors of that extensive community, while they confess the divine origin of the Bible, discountenance its perusal. It is undeniably true, that the bulk of their adherents are not permitted even to possess a copy of the New Testament.

I hold in my hand a letter from the present Pope to his Clergy, issued on occasion of his advancement to the papal throne, bearing date, "3rd day of May, 1824." You need not doubt its authenticity, as it was obtained at a Catholic Bookseller's, and is printed by the Printer and Bookseller to the Royal College of St Patrick, Maynooth, and Publisher to the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland. Here if any where, you may expect to find the genuine doctrine of the Romish Church, and here you will perceive undissembled antipathy to the general circulation of the word of truth.

"The wickedness of our foes," writes the

Pontiff, “ has proceeded so far, that in addition
“ to a deluge of pernicious books, hostile to re-
“ ligion, they endeavour to employ to its detri-
“ ment the sacred scriptures, which were given
“ to us by God for its support.”

“ You are aware, venerable brethren, that a
“ certain Society, called the *Bible Society*, strolls
“ with effrontery throughout the world ;* which
“ society, contemning the traditions of the Holy
“ Fathers, and contrary to the well known decree
“ of the Council of Trent, labours with all its
“ might, and by every means, to translate, or
“ rather to pervert, the Holy Bible into the vulgar
“ languages of every nation ; from which pro-
“ ceeding it is greatly to be feared, that what is
“ ascertained to have happened as to some pas-
“ sages, may also occur with regard to others ; to
“ wit : “ that by a perverse interpretation, the
“ Gospel of Christ be turned into a human Gos-
“ pel, or, what is still worse, into the Gospel
“ of the Devil.”

“ To avert this plague, our predecessors pub-
“ lished many ordinances ; and in his latter days,
“ Pius VII. of blessed memory, sent two briefs—
“ one to Ignatius, Archbishop of Gnesen, the

*: “ Non vos latet V V. F F. Societatem quamdam dictam
vulgo *Biblicam*, per totam orbem audacter vagari.”

“ other to Stanislaus, Archbishop of Mohilow—
 “ in which are many proofs, accurately and wisely
 “ collected from the sacred scriptures and from
 “ tradition, to shew how noxious this most wicked
 “ novelty is to both faith and morals.*

* An extract from one of these instruments so much admired by the “ Father of the Faithful,” will form a suitable accompaniment to his own production. The Brief addressed to the Archbishop of Mohilow, by Pius VII. contains the following characteristic passages. “ We were still more deeply grieved, when
 “ we read certain letters, signed with the name of you, our
 “ Brother ; wherein you authorised and exhorted the people committed to your care, to procure for themselves modern versions
 “ of the Bible, or willingly to accept them when offered, and carefully and attentively to peruse them ! Nothing certainly could
 “ more aggravate our grief than to behold you, who were placed
 “ to point out the ways of righteousness, become a stone of stumbling. For you ought carefully to have kept in view, what
 “ our Predecessors have always prescribed ; namely, *That if the
 “ Holy Bible in the vulgar tongue were permitted every where
 “ without discrimination, more injury than benefit would thence
 “ arise.*” You see therefore, venerable Brother, what ought
 “ to be our mode of acting toward you, if we were disposed to
 “ enforce the severity of the Canon Laws ! For said ST. THOMAS
 “ OF CANTERBURY, *he who does not come forward to remove
 “ what ought to be corrected, gives his sanction to error ; nor
 “ is he free from suspicion of a secret confederacy, who evidently neglects to oppose mischief.* But, we for the love we
 “ bear you, insist only upon that thing, from which, since it
 “ must be enjoined upon you by Divine Authority, we cannot
 “ refrain ; namely, that you would take away the scandal, which

“ We also, venerable brethren, in conformity
“ with our apostolic duty, exhort you to turn away
“ your flock by all means from these poisonous
“ by this mode of acting you have occasioned. Hence we most
“ earnestly exhort you, our Brother, and beseech you by the
“ bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you will strive to repair,
“ by a due and speedy amendment, all those things which you
“ have improperly taught or done concerning the new versions of
“ the Bible. And, I wish, venerable Brother, emulating the
“ example of illustrious men, which procured for them such
“ honour, that you would consider how you might reprobate
“ those deeds by a solemn and formal retractation! We cannot
“ however, avoid exciting you, and by virtue of Holy obe-
“ dience we even command you, to do at least what is necessary
“ for preserving the purity of doctrine, and the integrity of the
“ faith: namely, that in a fresh letter addressed to the people,
“ containing the whole contents both of the Decree of the Coun-
“ cil of Trent, and of the Letter of Pius VI. on this subject,
“ you should sincerely and plainly teach, *that the Christian*
“ *truth and doctrine, as well dogmatical as moral, are con-*
“ *tained not in the Scriptures only, but also in the tradi-*
“ *tions of the Catholic Church; and that it belongs to the*
“ *Church herself alone to interpret each of them.* Moreover,
“ you should declare, that you did not intend to recommend
“ those versions of the Sacred Books, in the vulgar tongues,
“ which were not exactly conformable to the rules prescribed by
“ the Canons and Apostolic Institutions: lastly, you should
“ make known and likewise declare, that in advising and recom-
“ mending the perusal of these divine Scriptures, *you had not*
“ *respect to all the Faithful indiscriminately, but only to*
“ *Ecclesiastical persons, or at most to those Laymen, who in*
“ *the judgment of their Pastors were sufficiently instructed.*”

“ pastures. Reprove, beseech, be instant in sea-
“ son and out of season, in all patience and doc-
“ trine, that the faithful intrusted to you (adhering
“ strictly to the rules of our congregation of the
“ Index) be persuaded, that if the sacred scrip-
“ tures be every where indiscriminately publish-
“ ed, more evil than advantage will arise thence,
“ on account of the rashness of men. Which
“ truth is not only proved by experience, but St.
“ Augustine as well as the other Holy Fathers,
“ has announced it in the following words :
“ For heresies have arisen, and certain perverse
“ doctrines, ensnaring souls and precipitating
“ them into the abyss, have been broached only
“ when the good scriptures had been badly un-
“ derstood, and when that which was badly un-
“ derstood in them, was rashly and boldly asserted.

“ Behold then, Venerable Brethren, the ten-
“ dency of this society, which moreover to attain
“ its ends, leaves nothing untried ; for not only
“ does it print its translations, but also wander-
“ ing through the towns and cities, it delights
“ in distributing them amongst the crowd. Nay
“ to allure the minds of the simple, at one time it
“ sells them, at another, with an insidious liber-
“ ality it bestows them.”*

* “ The Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo the XII. to his vene-

And what say the Catholic Archbishops and Bishops in Ireland to this letter? Do they disavow it? No! it suits their taste. They have not been ashamed to affix their names to an address directed to all the Faithful, Clergy and People, committed to their care, on the occasion, in which they express themselves thus :

“ On receiving this letter, replete with truth
 “ and wisdom, we at once recognized the voice
 “ of him for whom our Redeemer prayed that his
 “ faith might not fail, and to whose ardent charity
 “ he intrusted the care of his entire flock. We
 “ exclaimed therefore, with the Bishops of the
 “ Catholic Church, formerly assembled in council
 “ at Chalcedon, “ *Peter has spoken by Leo.*” Ex-
 “ cited thus, dearest Brethren by the example and
 “ exhortation of our Chief and Head, we have
 “ hastened not only to communicate to you his
 “ words, but also to add to them such admoni-
 “ tions and advice as our local knowledge and

able Brethren the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops, of the Catholic Church, with an English Translation of the same, Dublin: Printed by Richard Coyne, 1824.” Some readers may have seen these extracts, with some slight variations in the phraseology, different versions of the Letter being in circulation: that which is given above, is the *Catholic* translation.

“ more immediate connexion with you enable us
“ to give.

“ Our Holy Father recommends to the observ-
“ ance of the faithful, a rule of the congregation
“ of the Index, which prohibits the perusal of the
“ sacred scriptures in the vulgar tongue, without
“ the sanction of the competent authorities. His
“ Holiness wisely remarks, “ that more evil than
“ good is found to result from the indiscriminate
“ perusal of them, on account of the malice or
“ infirmity of men.” In this sentiment of our Head
“ and Chief we fully concur, and a sad experience
“ of its justice is found in the excesses and con-
“ flicting errors of those sects amongst whom such
“ perusal is unrestrained. With us it is not so ;
“ and approved versions of the Holy Scriptures
“ with notes, explanatory of the text, are read by
“ many of you with edification and advantage. We
“ rejoice dearly beloved, that the Word of God
“ should dwell abundantly with you ; it is useful
“ to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in
“ justice, and when read with piety and devotion,
“ especially in families and at the time of prayer,
“ it assists the man of God, whose heart is hum-
“ ble, and whose understanding is captivated to
“ the obedience due to Christ, and to his Holy
“ Church, to become perfect, and to be furnished

“ unto every good work But as heresies have
“ arisen and perverse doctrines, ensnaring souls,
“ and precipitating them into the abyss, have been
“ broached only when the good Scriptures have
“ been badly understood, and when that which
“ was badly understood, was rashly and boldly
“ asserted ; hence it is necessary that such pas-
“ sages as are hard to be understood, and which
“ the ignorant and unsettled daily wrest to their
“ perdition, be always received in that sense
“ which the Church of God has assigned to them,
“ and which is the same that she had been taught
“ by the Holy Ghost. In reading therefore, the
“ sacred scriptures, dearly beloved, seek only to
“ become wise to salvation, and avoid that most
“ perverse of all errors, that source of numberless
“ evils, that pride and presumption which has de-
“ solated the Church, and which would tempt you
“ to set up your own weak and fallible judgment
“ against the judgment of the ONE, HOLY, CA-
“ THOLIC, and APOSTOLIC CHURCH, which is
“ THE PILLAR and GROUND OF TRUTH, illuminated
“ by the Holy Spirit, and directed and governed
“ in all her decisions by the Son of God.

“ As to the books which are distributed by
“ the Bible Society, under the names of Bibles or
“ Testaments, or Tracts, or whatsoever name may

“ be given to them, as they treat of religion and
“ are not sanctioned by us, or by any competent
“ authority in the Catholic Church, the use, the
“ perusal, the reading, or retaining of them, is en-
“ tirely and without any exception, prohibited to
“ you. To enter into their merits or demerits is
“ foreign to our purpose: such of them as have
“ come under our observation are replete with
“ errors, many of them are heretical, and gene-
“ rally they abound in calumnies or misrepresen-
“ tations against our holy religion: as such they
“ are carefully to be avoided; and should any of
“ them happen to be in your possession, they are
“ to be restored to the persons who may have
“ bestowed them to you, or otherwise to be de-
“ stroyed; except Bibles or Testaments, which
“ if not returned to the donors, are to be depo-
“ sited with the parish priest.”

You now perceive, my Christian friends, that hostility to the exercise of personal judgment respecting religious truth, and to the promulgation of the oracles of God, characterises the system of which we speak, both where it is subjected to the softening influence of a Protestant vicinity, and where it dwells alone;—where it is merely tolerated, and where it reigns in undisputed greatness. Popery in England, in Ireland,

and in Italy, is so far uniform ; it appeals from the written word to unwritten traditions, and requires from all its votaries unreserved submission to the interpretations of the church. The insufficiency of the Scriptures to be the rule of faith, is its fundamental principle : the nature of the superstructure, erected on this foundation, will appear in the course of our subsequent inquiries.

The second great principle of Popery is *the right of the Romish Clergy to supply the deficiency of which they tell us, by authoritatively fixing the doctrines to be believed, and the precepts to be observed.*

It may be said by some, if we allow that the scriptures are not an adequate directory—if we concede the incompetence of the poor, the ignorant, and the busy, to interpret for themselves ; yet, why should they not rely on the instructions of their own clergy, as properly as on those of the clergy of the Church of Rome. Have there not been men as learned in the Churches of England, of Scotland, of Saxony, and of Switzerland, as any among the Romish Hierarchy ? Aware of our ignorance of medical science we choose our own physician ; why should we not also select our own religious instructor ? By all

means do so, replies the Catholic advocate, only be careful to commit yourself to the guidance of a regular practitioner. Ascertain among the various competitors, for your confidence, which is most worthy, and then surrender your consciences to his custody. The Church of Rome is the only Christian Church, its ministers therefore are the only true depositaries of Christian doctrine.

“As long,” says Dr. Milner, “as you professed to hunt out the several articles of divine revelation, one by one, through the several books of scripture, and under all the difficulties and uncertainties, which as I have clearly shewn attend this study, your task was interminable, and your success hopeless : whereas now, by taking the Church of God for your guide, you have but one simple enquiry to make: *Which is this Church ?* Because if there is any one religious truth more evident than the others from reason, from the scriptures both old and new, from the Apostle’s Creed, and from constant tradition, it is this, that the Catholic Church preserves the true worship of the Deity ; she being the fountain of truth, the house of faith, and the temple of God, as an ancient father of the Church expresses it. Hence it is as clear as the noon-day

“ light, that by solving this one question : *Which*
“ *is the true Church?* you will at once solve every
“ question of religious controversy, that ever has
“ been, or that ever can be agitated. You will
“ not need to spend your life in studying the sa-
“ cred scriptures in their original languages and
“ their authentic copies, and in confronting pas-
“ sages with each other, from Genesis to Reve-
“ lations—a task by no means calculated, as is
“ evident, for the bulk of mankind :—you will
“ only have to hear what the Church teaches upon
“ the several articles of her faith, in order to know
“ with certainty what God has revealed concern-
“ ing them. Neither need you hearken to con-
“ tending sects and doctors of the present, or of
“ past times ; you will need only to hear the
“ *Church*, which indeed Christ commands you
“ to hear, under pain of being treated as a heathen
“ or a publican. If you admit, but for an instant,
“ Church authority, then Luther, Calvin, and
“ Cranmer, with all the other founders of Protes-
“ tantism, were evidently heretics in rebelling
“ against it. In short no other Church but the
“ Catholic, can claim to be a religious guide,
“ because evidently she alone is the *true Church*
“ *of Christ*. This assertion leads me to the proof
“ of what I asserted above respecting the facility

“and certainty with which persons of good will
“may solve that most important question *Which*
“*is the true Church.*”*

Perhaps you now expect, as you are encouraged to measure the temple, that for this purpose you are to be intrusted with the reed. Perhaps you imagine, that for a few days at least, while you are examining the claims of different Churches, you will be permitted to inspect a Bible. Perhaps you suppose that you are to compare the doctrine of the Romish Church, with the doctrine of Jesus Christ; the character of the Romish Clergy, with the character of the Apostles; the spirit which they breathe, with the spirit the New Testament encourages;—the practices they inculcate, with the precepts of the inspired volume. But far, far away be such an heretical supposition; these would indeed be fatal errors; this would lead you to Protestantism at once. Other tests, better adapted to their purpose, are supplied by the Romish Clergy; according to which they invite you to determine the exclusive right of their community to be denominated *the Church of Christ*.

The Church of Christ, say they, is One; the Church of Christ is Holy; the Church of Christ

* End of Religious Controversy, p. 118, 119.

is Catholic ; the Church of Christ is Apostolic : judge by these criteria and you will see that the Church of Christ is—the Church of Rome.

Our Church, say they, is *One* : You are divided into innumerable sects ; dissonant in sentiment ; hostile in feeling ; various in practice. Even in the same Church among you there are different parties : some claiming to be the ‘ Evangelical,’ others calling themselves the ‘ Orthodox.’ Can your’s be the *one fold*, under the one shepherd ? We, on the contrary, are all under one government, our doctrine is every where the same, and our liturgy is uniform, in all that is essential.*

Our Church, say they, is *Holy*. Its doctrine must be holy, for it is the same as that of the Apostles, we are not permitted to change it ; whereas many among you have promulgated impious sentiments. We have greater means of holiness than you have, for we have seven sacraments, and you have only two. We can boast innumerable saints who lived and died in our

* “ In short such is the Unity of the Catholic Church, that
“ when Catholic priests or laymen, landing at one of the neigh-
“ bouring ports, from India, Canada, or Brazil, come to my
“ Chapel, I find them capable of joining with me in every essen-
“ tial part of the divine services.”—End of Religious Con-
troversy, p. 132.

communion, while your first reformers were wicked men. It was to gratify the base passions of Henry the Eighth, that the Reformation was effected in England, and similar causes have conduced to it elsewhere. We have divine attestations to our sanctity in miracles wrought by the members of our church; but the power of working miracles does not exist among you.*

Our Church, say they, is *Catholic*. Go where you will and inquire for the Catholic Church, you are pointed to ours. We are more numerous than others, as well as more ancient. We are to be found wherever Christianity prevails; we have descended from the earliest ages: but your Churches are not *universal*, with respect either to time, or to place.†

* “ The comparison which I am going to institute between
“ the Catholic Church and the leading Protestant Societies on
“ the article of Sanctity or Holiness, will be made on these four
“ heads. First, the Doctrine of Holiness; secondly, the Means
“ of Holiness; thirdly, the Fruits of Holiness; and lastly, the
“ Divine Testimony of Holiness ”—*Ut supra*, p. 141.

† “ If any stranger in London, Edinburgh or Amsterdam,
“ were to ask his way to the *Catholic Chapel*, I would risk
“ my life for it, that no sober Protestant inhabitant would direct
“ him to any other place of worship than to ours. . . . And
“ with regard to this very Church (the Church of England)
“ nothing can be more inconsistent, than to ascribe the greater
“ part of the population of our two islands to it. For if the
“ Irish Catholics, the Scotch Presbyterians, the English Me-

Our Church, say they, is Apostolic. Our ministers have received ordination from legitimate hands. The Apostles ordained Bishops; those Bishops ordained others; the succession has been uninterrupted; from generation to generation the efficacy of the Apostolic sanction has been transmitted to our times. We are the duly authorized; you have no right to administer sacraments, or guide the flock; whatever you may arrogate to yourselves, we can prove your ordination to be invalid.*

“thodists and other Dissenters, together with the vast population who neither are nor profess to be, of any religion at all, are subtracted, to what a comparatively small number will the Church of England be reduced! And how utterly absurd will it be in *her* to pretend to be the *Catholic Church*.—*Ut supra*, p. 192, 195.

* “Every Catholic Pastor is authorized and enabled to address his flock as follows: ‘The word of God which I announce to you and the Holy Sacraments which I dispense to you, I am **QUALIFIED** to announce and dispense by such a Catholic Bishop, who was consecrated by such another Catholic Bishop, and so on, in a series which reaches to the Apostles themselves, and I am **AUTHORIZED** to preach and minister to you by such a Prelate, who received authority for this purpose from the successor of St. Peter, in the Apostolic See of Rome.’—“Hence it clearly appears that there is, and can be, no Apostolic succession of Ministry in the Established Church, more than in the other congregations or societies of Protestants. All their preaching, and ministering, in their several degrees, is performed by mere *human authority*.”—*Ut sup.* 216, 225.

These various topics, wrought up by men of shrewdness and information, furnish a very plausible apology for calling their Church *the Church*; and for maintaining that out of it there is no salvation. By these arguments they endeavour to establish their right to treat all others as heretical schismatics; and to render it evident that they have a monopoly of truth, and a patent to interpret the scriptures. But we cannot concede that these are the tests by which the claims of their community should be determined. We cannot consent to make our investigation in the dark; but must repeat our call for the light of revelation to assist us in forming our judgment. And with this light to guide us, we clearly perceive that the pillars they themselves have selected to support their edifice, are bending and ready to fall beneath its weight.

Do they say that they are *One*? So were the Babel builders. "Behold," said the Almighty, "the people is one!" One language was on their lips. One purpose was in their hearts. One course was pursued by them all in their desperate career of folly.*

Do they say that they are *Holy*? So did the ancient Jews, whose hypocrisy Isaiah unmasked.

* Genesis xi. 4.

They were a rebellious people ; they walked in a way that was not good ; they provoked God to anger continually ; yet each of them possessed sufficient self-complacency to say to his neighbour : “ Stand by thyself ; come not near to me ; I am holier than thou ! ” *

Do they say that they are *Catholic* ? So said the page of prophecy respecting the worshippers of the beast, “ whose mouth spake great things and blasphemies.” They are not more generally dispersed throughout the world, than it was predicted his adherents should be : “ power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations.” †

Do they say that they are *Apostolic* ? In the days of the Apostles, “ the mystery of iniquity did already work.” Even then were there many Antichrists ! ‡ The claims on which they rest then have been made, or might have been, by men on whose foreheads the stamp of infamy is fixed by the unerring hand of the Almighty.

But if they still contend, that it is by such tests the question between us must be judged, we will not hesitate to deny that the Church of Rome

* Isaiah lxx. 3, 4, 5.

† Rev. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7. ‡ 2 Thes. ii. 2. 1 John ii. 18.

possesses these attributes, however tenaciously it may claim them. It is in vain for them to pretend that its history exhibits these qualities, till all Ecclesiastical records are burnt, and the memory of man has ceased to do its office. Have not religious disputes, in repeated instances, armed one half of the Popedom against the other? If they will tell us, for example, in what the unity of the Church consisted in the days of Urban the Sixth, and Clement the Seventh, when Pope appeared against Pope, and excommunication was exchanged for excommunication;—if they will prove that there was never any alienation of heart between the Dominicans and the Franciscans; and that Scottists and Thomists, Jansenists and Jesuits have always taught the same doctrines; we shall probably be able to shew, on similar principles, that Protestant Churches may also boast their unity.

We do however maintain that the Church of Jesus Christ, in the strictest signification of the phrase, possesses all these attributes. But then we do not mean by this expression any one of those communities distinguished among men as *Churches*, but truly pious persons of every degree, to whatever denomination of professors they may belong. Not Papists or Protes.

tants,—not adherents to the English Establishment, or Dissenters from its communion, considered as such ; but all of every class who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. We call that man a Christian who receives Jesus of Nazareth as his mediator, his instructor, and his Lord,—if his faith is operative, to cleanse his heart, and regulate his life. Whatever be the name of his sect, or the form of his worship—whether he offers harmonious adoration in a Cathedral, or utters rustic thanksgivings in a barn;—in such a man we recognize a member of that Church which our Redeemer “ cherishes ” by his grace, which he “ has purchased with his blood,” and which he has “ sanctified and cleansed, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” This Church must be *Catholic*, or universal, as it comprehends “ all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord both theirs and ours.”

This Church is *One*. The rites practised by its members may differ ; the garb of its ministers may vary ; and mistakes relating both to doctrine and duty may attach to all. But whatever dissimilarity may be found in their opinions or customs, all possessors of genuine godliness

are one in spirit. The object of their faith is the same ; they all believe in Jesus the only begotten of the Father, rely on his sacrifice, and expect from his hands the crown of glory. The object of their love is the same ; the excellencies of him who once died on Calvary, but now reigns in Heaven, charm their bosoms, and excite in their hearts the most powerful emotions of esteem and gratitude. The object of their pursuit is the same ; to glorify God, by obeying his laws, and acquiring his likeness, is the business of their lives. They constitute but one army, though divided into several regiments ; different systems of tactics may regulate their movements ; occasional disputes among their leaders may impede the progress of their arms ; but all are opposing the reign of evil, under the banners of the Lord of Hosts ; and sincerely seeking the honour of his crown, and the extension of his empire.

This Church is also *Holy* ; no unsanctified individual belongs to it. A wicked man may associate with its members ; his appearances of piety may deceive them ; he may be recognized as a brother. Counterfeit coin may be mingled with the true, but the coin of the realm is real gold. It is fact, that the motives of some who have es-

poused the cause of truth would not bear to be scrutinized, and that their conduct did not correspond with their profession. But though the zeal of Jehu was not pure, the idolatries which had prevailed under the house of Ahab, which he was the means of removing, are not on that account to be justified. Good principles must not be rejected because bad men have sometimes found it politic to patronize them.

This church is *Apostolic*. The Apostles belonged to it themselves; they laid the foundations on which it is established. And as to visible churches, or communities of professed Christians, we cannot but think that that church is most Apostolic, which coincides most fully with the doctrinal and practical instructions contained in the Apostolic letters; and exhibits most evidently, that spirit which the Apostles evinced. But can the Church of Rome be Apostolic? Alas! how little would the Apostles know, were they now to return to the earth, of its tenets, its rites, and its officers! Patriarchs and Primates, Archbishops and Cardinals, Metropolitans and Suffragans, with all the secular and regular clergy, presenting themselves before Peter and John, would find it difficult to teach

them the gradation of their ranks, and the limits of their jurisdiction.

The arguments adduced by the Romish Clergy to prove their inherent right to regulate our belief, appear then to us, to be incorrect in principle, and inapplicable in fact. Uninspired men could possess no such authority, were the church in which they ministered, as pure as that at Ephesus in its brightest days. And the Church of Rome, far from being identical with the living Church of Christ, in our apprehension betrays conspicuous tokens of putrefaction. For if a community, professedly Christian, can ever become dead, corrupt, and pestilential; it must assuredly be so, when it substitutes the dogmas of men for the doctrines of Christ; when it dispenses with his authority, and sets up in his stead a Lord of its own creation; when it is proud and uncharitable, ambitious and greedy of wealth,—“arrayed in purple and scarlet,”—“decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls;”—and “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus.”

The third of those fundamental principles on which this system is built, is *the supremacy of*

the Bishop of Rome over all other ministers, and over all Christian people.

The exaction of universal obedience to the sovereign Pontiff is founded on these three positions : the first, that our Lord gave to Peter supremacy over the other Apostles ; the second, that Peter afterwards became the Bishop of Rome ; the third, that his authority descends from him to his successors in that city.

If sufficient evidence cannot be adduced to show the truth of each of these ideas, the claim of the Pope to govern the church as vicegerent of Christ, must fall to the ground. It is not enough that one, or even two of them should be established ; all must be proved, or an essential link will be wanting. It is not, therefore, because we are driven to it by necessity, that we say we cannot admit any one of the three. Any two of them we might concede, and yet justify our independence ; but the love of truth compels us to disbelieve them all.

That Peter was accustomed to take the lead among the disciples we readily grant. His natural fervour, and promptitude placed him at the head of the little band, and he might on various accounts be denominated “ the first.” But there is no evidence that he was endowed with

any authority over his brethren. The power of binding and loosing in earth and in heaven, was equally given to them all.* A promise similar in its nature was made to ten of the Apostles after the resurrection of their Lord, when Jesus said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," breathed on them, and added, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."† It is true, that on one occasion, Jesus said to Peter individually, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven;"‡ but as this was spoken in reply to what Peter had previously said, there is nothing in this circumstance, to prove that the power confided to him was different from that bestowed on his colleagues; especially as afterwards language of similar signification was addressed to them generally. The rock, on which the Redeemer declared he would build his church, is by no means so naturally interpreted of Peter, as of the confession which Peter made,—“thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;”—a confession which expresses the faith of every Christian, and which the gates of Hell—the

* Matt. xviii. 18. † John xx. 21, 23, 23,

‡ Matt. xvi. 19.

policy and power of the infernal conspirators has never been able to subvert.

But whatever might be the nature of Peter's pre-eminence, there is no reason to believe that he was Bishop of Rome. If the testimony of those ancient writers be received, whose declarations are our only evidence that he ever was in that city, he was put to death there in the twelfth year of Nero; can we then suppose that the Apostle of the Circumcision, several years before the destruction of Jerusalem, settled as Bishop of a Gentile city? The Church at Rome was founded long before this time; and certainly Peter was not its Bishop, either when Paul wrote to it in the fourth year of Nero, or when he visited it as a prisoner, in the seventh.

But even had Peter sustained this office, how slender would have been the pretence afforded to his successor at Rome, to claim authority over the venerable Apostle John, who lived thirty years after the Martyrdom of Peter, or to exercise any supremacy which Peter may be supposed to have possessed over his fellow disciples! Yet, on this quicksand, are those extravagant pretensions founded, which have enabled the chief ecclesiastic at Rome, and his immediate coadjutors, not only to tyrannize over other pro-

fessed ministers of Christ, but also to trample on the rights of sovereign princes. Thus has he been enabled to “exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

These are the leading principles of that system, to the worship and authorized practices of which I invite your attention next Lord’s day evening. A system, the basis of which is an unfounded opinion, that the revelation which God has mercifully given, is insufficient to guide us; which demands the prostration of our intellect, before the decisions of fallible mortals; and which represents the whole Church of God, as under the superintendence of one, who can produce no credentials from heaven to enforce our submission. Such a system usurping the place of New Testament religion, may well be characterized an “apostasy”—“a falling way.” Its representative who sits at Rome, opposing the authority, and doctrine, and spirit of Christ, may be termed without injustice “the Man of Sin;” the resemblance of whose conduct to that of Judas, who in the guise of a friend betrayed his master, may well entitle him to the appellation which Judas received, “the Son of Perdition;”—who taking

his seat in the Christian Church, and assuming dominion over the consciences of all, arrogates to himself that homage which belongs exclusively to God ;—" who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

And now, my dear hearers, permit me to say before I sit down, as you profess to be Protestants, act consistently with your profession ; and make use of those advantages with which you are favoured.

You believe that the scriptures are " able to make you wise unto salvation." In order to this, remember they must be read ; they must be understood ; they must be believed. Do not content yourselves with knowing that a Bible is in your possession ; peruse its holy pages ; treasure up its dictates in your memory ; let them be your continual study. With docility receive them, for " these are the true sayings of God." And conscious of your liability to err, through the weakness of your faculties, and the prejudices with which sin has darkened every human mind, look up to him by whom they were indited, begging him to impart " the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him ;

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe."

You acknowledge that the Church of Christ consists of all who truly love him, believing the testimony concerning him, which is given in the volume of truth. Be anxious to be found yourselves in that happy number. Be not satisfied with any thing short of that acquaintance with him, which produces the entire surrender of body and spirit, to his care and controul. Without this, by whatever name you may be called, or however highly you may be esteemed among your religious friends; you are not such Christians as the Lord of glory will confess, at the final retribution. Contemplate his character; is he not worthy of your love? Contemplate his deeds; is he not worthy of your confidence? Contemplate the offices he sustains; is he not adapted to your wants? He is able to save you from sin and from ignorance, from guilt and from ruin. He invites those who labour, and are heavy laden to come to him for rest. Listen to his voice; receive him as your Saviour.

You disclaim all allegiance to that imperious mortal, who demands submission to his mandates, from all the servants of Jehovah. Remember that you have not received liberty, that you might be lawless, but are under the law to Christ. To his authority you are bound unreservedly to submit. By his commands regulate your conduct. Seek his approbation, as your best reward. "If you continue in his word, then are you his disciples, indeed."

LECTURE II.

ON ITS WORSHIP AND AUTHORIZED CUSTOMS.

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“ For, laying aside the Commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups ; and many other such like things ye do.” And he said unto them, “ Full well ye reject the Commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”—*Mark* vii. 8, 9.

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IF it were not important on any other account that you should be acquainted with those rites and customs, which I am about this evening to introduce to your notice ; this one fact would, I think, justify me in speaking upon them, and you in coming to hear, that they display the consequences which naturally result from once admitting that the scriptures are insufficient to be the Christian rule of faith and practice. This principle, some of you remember, I represented last Lord's day evening, as the basis of that

system which we denominate Popery ; it being the fundamental tenet of the Church of Rome, that tradition must be joined with the written word of God to constitute our rule, and that the meaning of the whole must be determined, not according to the individual judgment of the inquirer, but according to the interpretation given by the clergy.

It might, perhaps, be thought by some, that the importance of this error could not be very great. It will amount to nearly the same thing, you might be ready to say, whether we take scripture alone as our rule, or scripture in conjunction with tradition, and interpreted by the general voice. In all probability, the current traditions will not differ much from the inspired record ; and the interpretation given by a large number of learned men will not be very dissimilar from that which would be given by a judicious individual. This you might imagine at the first glance, before you considered whither the principle would carry you ; and nothing is better calculated to convince you of the fallacy of this idea, and of the importance of forming your religious views from the scriptures alone, than to show how far it has actually carried others. I am mistaken, if the view we are now

about to take of the worship, and authorized customs of the Romish Church, will not demonstrate to every candid mind, that such a deviation from the standard of truth, is sufficiently great to nullify the whole counsel of God: for to the Romish Doctors now, it appears to me, that it may be said, as correctly as to the Jewish Doctors formerly, “ In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Ye make the word of God of none effect through your tradition which ye have delivered.”

But we need not be surprised, if we find on examination, that through the influence of this principle, the worship and customs of the Church of Rome do differ widely from what the New Testament prescribes. For what is tradition, but report?—A Report handed down from age to age without written memorials? The true question between us is, whether the evidence of *report* will bear to be set in competition with the evidence furnished by *documents*? We all know how little dependence is to be placed on report, even when it relates to the events of the current month. You need not be told how inaccurate a story soon becomes when verbally transmitted. Hearsay evidence is on this account, wisely rejected in our courts of justice; a

man is only permitted to depose to what he himself has seen or heard. The tale that passes through the lips of different narrators, receives a tinge from the prejudices of each. The love of the marvellous, causes one to heighten an occurrence that was somewhat extraordinary. The love of scandal causes a second to aggravate that part of the case which wears the most censurable aspect. The love of hypothesis induces a third to suppress a particular, which accords not with his favourite system. This suppression produces a want of connexion, which the next narrator supplies from his own imagination, to make the account complete. The newly invented part is made by the next person, the principal feature of the story; and thus in the end, the history you receive, bears not the slightest resemblance to that from which it sprung.

And it is easy to perceive that these traditions were especially liable to be affected by the partialities or interests of those through whom they were transmitted. When the question was, What were the doctrines and practices of the Apostles; and the appeal was made to report, official persons were peculiarly likely to give a corrupted version. If a teacher of Christianity were smitten with the love of power,—which

there is too much reason to believe that many teachers of Christianity were, even in early times, he would be sure to tell that tradition which seemed to give authority to the minister, but would be likely to leave untold that which had the contrary tendency. If he were not thoroughly conscientious, he would not be very scrupulous about the source from whence a tradition came, if it suited his own purpose; but would be hard to believe a narrative authentic, that opposed his views. If his chief aim were popularity and human applause, the purity of Christian rites would be greatly endangered; under pretence of relieving their naked simplicity, and imparting to them additional solemnity and splendour, traditions would be eagerly sought, and zealously enforced, the observance of which in worship was adapted to excite the imagination, to inflame the passions and please the worldly.

As to the decisions of synods and general councils, it does not require much knowledge of human nature to discern, that influence of a kind quite distinct from the simple love of truth, would sometimes be felt by members of such assemblies. Attachment to a party, or friendship for an advocate, desire to please a prince, or fear of

offending a powerful ecclesiastic, would operate more strongly on many voters, than they themselves were aware of; and would materially lessen the value of the decrees they issued for general observance. Decisions formed in circumstances very trying to the integrity of those from whom they proceeded, have however become the standard of orthodoxy, to those who prefer "the judgment of the church," to the unsophisticated dictates of the inspired volume.

It seemed almost necessary to make some such observations as these, to render the accounts credible, which I shall have to give of the ceremonies practised in the Romish Church; so widely do its rites and institutions differ from the appointments of the Redeemer and his Apostles. Having offered these preliminary remarks, I proceed without further delay, to the proposed investigation.

Observe then, in the first place, that the *public services of the Church are habitually conducted in a language not understood by the congregation*. Most of you were aware of this fact, but had you never heard of it before you could scarcely receive the intelligence without astonishment. You would naturally think it proper that Englishmen should pray in English, and that foreigners

should present their addresses to the God who made them, in words intelligible to themselves. But the prayers of the Romish Church are only recited in the Roman language. A sermon or exhortation indeed is frequently delivered in sounds which have meaning in the ears of those to whom it is addressed ; but the prayers and the praises, all that strictly speaking constitutes the worship, is in Latin. In Ireland, in England, in France, in Spain, in India and in South America the offices of the Church are conducted in Latin.

Now what degree of devotion is to be expected from men who worship in an unknown tongue ? Suppose the service to be intrinsically excellent ; suppose that every line is adapted to excite devotional feelings in the mind of him who comprehends its meaning ; still the effect must be entirely lost if the signification of the terms by which it should be conveyed to his heart, is a secret to the worshipper. It is true, that in England, there is in existence an English version of the Roman Missal, professedly drawn up and published for the use of the Catholic laity. But the public recital of the service is still in Latin ; and though to a man who does not understand the words he hears, it is a great advantage to have before him words of similar meaning in his native

tongue, the impression thus indirectly produced can be but small. And of what use can such a translation be to those who cannot read? How, for example, are the Irish peasantry to avail themselves of its assistance? The very persons who most need instruction and guidance in their prayers, the most ignorant classes of the inhabitants of Popish countries, are left quite destitute of help to direct their aspirations to the Creator. Even in the sanctuary, they may gaze and wonder, but they understand not!

You naturally ask what reasons are assigned for this extraordinary deviation from all that appears rational. The answer is, that Latin was originally the prevailing language in Christendom, so that where it is not understood, it is not the Church that has introduced a foreign language among the people, but it is the people who have forgotten their ancient language; that Latin is vernacular in some parts of Europe, and is so similar to the languages of France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, that where these languages are understood no inconvenience ^vcan be occasioned by its adoption; and that it is taught in other places! Ladies of polite education will hear with astonishment that they can understand what is recited before them in Latin, because they are

acquainted with French or Italian. Yet this is asserted by a Right Reverend Bishop of the Catholic Church, as an excuse for the conduct of himself and his brethren, who conduct the public worship of God in the language of ancient Rome ! These are his words—words written in English, and printed for general perusal : “ The Latin language is vernacular in Hungary, and the neighbouring countries ; it is taught in all the Catholic settlements of the universe, and it approaches so near to the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and French, as to be understood, in a general kind of way, by those who use these several languages.”*

Can these gentlemen wonder if Protestants esteem such allegations unsatisfactory, and endeavour to account for their practice in some other way ? Can they wonder if they hear us remark, that secret incantations, consisting of unintelligible sounds, are performed by professors of sorcery, in order to strike the credulous applicant with superstitious awe. Can they complain, with justice, if we remind them, that the performance of worship in a dead language, was adapted to give them ascendancy over the igno-

* Dr. Milner's End of Religious Controversy, p. 339.

rant at first, and tends to preserve it now, and that if the Bible is taken away from the layman, and the authorized prayers of the Church are given to him in a language that he cannot read, his dependence on the clergy becomes complete, and the Priest is made a daily necessary of life? Could they be surprised if any of our people were to say to theirs, "Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship!" Are not they teaching men to honour God "with their lips," rather than with their hearts? "I had rather speak five words in the Church, with my meaning understood,* that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

Secondly : *Much of the worship of the Romish Church is addressed to creatures, rather than to the Creator.* Praises and prayers are offered to men long since dead, but canonized by the sovereign Pontiff.

The advocates of Popery are accustomed to charge Protestant writers with misrepresentations of their doctrine and practice on this point. The fact itself they cannot deny, but they say they render *supreme* homage to God only. They

* See Macknight and Bothroyd, on 1 Cor. xiv. p. 19.

pray to God, they tell us, to bestow good things upon them ; they pray to saints, to intercede with God, on their behalf, and thus procure the desired boon.* There is I grant a perceptible distinction ; and we shall do well to keep it in mind. But were we to admit the truth of these representations, in their fullest extent, these charges would still remain ;—that their practice is adapted to wean the mind from God, and lead them to transfer to others that love and confidence and gratitude,

* “ Let us now hear what is the genuine doctrine of the
 “ Catholic Church in this article, as solemnly defined by the
 “ Pope, and nearly 300 Prelates of different nations, at the
 “ Council of Trent, in the face of the whole world : it is simply
 “ this that “ the Saints reigning with Christ *offer up their*
 “ *prayers to God for men ;* that it is *good and useful* suppliantly
 “ to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, help,
 “ and assistance, to obtain favours from God, through his Son,
 “ Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alone *our Redeemer and Sa-*
 “ *viour.*’ Hence the Catechism of the Council of Trent, pub-
 “ lished in virtue of its decree, by order of Pope Pius V. teaches
 “ that God and the Saints are not to be prayed to in the same
 “ manner ; for we pray to God, that *he himself would give us*
 “ *good things and deliver us from evil things ;* but we beg
 “ of the saints, because they are pleasing to God, that they
 “ *would be our advocates, and obtain from God what we stand*
 “ *in need of.*”—*End of Religious Controversy, p. 248.*

To a Protestant mind, however, it is difficult to reconcile with these representations, many expressions which Catholics are accustomed to use ; but we must maintain that no such dis-

which he alone deserves ; that it ascribes to creatures the exercise of illustrious attributes which belong exclusively to Deity ; and that it is neither sanctioned by the command of the Most High, nor the example of inspired men. If the assistance of a Saint be implored in those offices of the Church which are intended for universal use, do they not ascribe to this dead man the faculty of hearing prayer offered to him at the same time by suppliants in the four different quarters of the globe, and virtually attribute to him greater compassion than to the really Omnipresent and Omnipotent Creator ? If in the most solemn exercises of public devotion, oblations are offered to the honour of departed Saints ; if confession of sin is professedly made to them ; and if petitions are addressed to their clemency, is

tion is felt or observed by the illiterate Papist when he prostrates himself before a venerated image, or calls on St. Patrick, or St. Winifrede to deliver him from his distresses. Louis XVIII. does not seem to have observed it very accurately when he prayed thus at the baptism of the infant Duke of Bourdeaux : “ Let us
“ invoke for him the protection of the Mother of God, the Queen
“ of the Angels ; let us implore her to watch over his days, and
“ remove far from his cradle the misfortune with which it has
“ pleased Providence to afflict his relatives and to conduct him
“ by a less rugged path than I have had to eternal felicity.”

not God defrauded of that religious homage which is due to him alone?

In the Roman Missal, as published for the use of the English laity, containing the masses appointed to be said throughout the year, abundant proof may be found of these unhallowed practices, a portion of which shall be laid before you. In the ordinary of the Mass, the recipient says, “ I
“ confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary,
“ ever a Virgin, to blessed Michael the Arch-
“ angel, to blessed John Baptist, to the Holy
“ Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the Saints,
“ and to you Father, that I have sinned exceed-
“ ingly in thought word and deed, through my
“ fault, through my fault, through my most
“ grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the bles-
“ sed Mary, ever a Virgin, blessed Michael the
“ Archangel, blessed John Baptist, the Holy
“ Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the Saints,
“ and you O Father, to pray to the Lord our
“ God for me.” Here you perceive confession is made not only to the Priest who is present, but to absent Saints and Angels, as though they participated in those perfections, the possession of which enabled the adorable Emmanuel to say, “ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Afterwards, the Priest bowing before the middle of the altar, says, "Receive, O holy Trinity, this oblation which we make to thee in memory of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honour of the blessed Mary, ever a virgin, of blessed John Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all of the Saints: that it may be available *to their honour*, and our salvation: and may they vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through the same Christ our Lord."

Among the "Votive Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary," these expressions of adoration occur. "Hail! Holy Mother, who didst bring forth the King who reigns over heaven and earth for evermore."....."Thou art blessed, and worthy of our respects, O Mary, the Virgin, who without prejudice to thy virginity, didst become the mother of our Saviour. O Virgin-mother of God! he whom the whole world cannot contain, became man and was shut up in thy womb."....."Thou art truly happy, O sacred Virgin Mary, and most worthy of praise: for out of thee arose the Sun of righteousness, Christ our God."....."Blessed art thou O Virgin Mary who didst bear the

“ Creator of all things : thou didst bring forth
“ him who made thee, and remainest a Virgin
“ for ever.” After the reception of the Eucharist,
it is added, “ Having received O Lord, what is
“ to advance our salvation ; grant we may always
“ be protected *by the patronage of blessed Mary,*
“ *ever a Virgin, in whose honour we have offered*
“ *this sacrifice to thy Majesty.*”“ Rejoice, O
“ Virgin Mary, thou alone hast destroyed all
“ heresies. Who didst believe the words of
“ Gabriel the archangel. Whilst a virgin thou
“ didst bring forth him that was God and man ;
“ and after childbirth didst remain a pure Virgin.”

The degree of religious confidence placed in saints, and especially in the mother of our Lord, may be seen in their sermons as well as in their prayers. A sermon by the Abbé Papillon, delivered in the Chapel Royal of France in London, on the 15th of August last, which the leading clergy of the English Catholics have thought it expedient to publish, commences thus : “ Mary
“ glorified God most holily in her mortal life,
“ and now God glorifies her magnificently, placing
“ her throne at the side of that of her Son, and
“ above those of the cherubim and seraphim.
“ Assembled, my brethren, to celebrate the great
“ festival of her glorious assumption into heaven,

“ the most solemn of all those which the Church
“ celebrates in honour of the Blessed Virgin, let
“ us fix our attention and partake as much as our
“ weakness will permit, in the lively joy caused
“ in this celestial habitation on her triumphal
“ entry : but let us not confine ourselves to a
“ barren devotion ; let us ask ourselves what it
“ was that merited for Mary so high a degree of
“ grandeur and sublimity ? Was it principally
“ her firm faith, her virginal purity, or her ardent
“ love ? No. What was it then that most in-
“ fluenced the choice of the Almighty, in de-
“ corating her so splendidly ? It was that rare
“ virtue by which man, being displeasing to
“ himself, becomes infinitely pleasing to God—
“ Humility. If we would, my dear brethren,
“ raise with solidity the edifice of our sancti-
“ fication, let us lay it on the foundation of hu-
“ mility, without which the building will not
“ stand : let us dig as deep as we can into our
“ interior, in order that it may deeply cast its
“ roots ; *let us on this beautiful day, obtain it of*
“ *God by the pressing entreaties of Mary, for she*
“ *is the Mother of God, and our Mother. As*
“ *Mother of God she can do much with him ; and*
“ *as our Mother she can do much in our favour.*
“ Let us then, on this great day, place ourselves

“ *under her special protection* ; and after having
“ offered this short homage, so legitimately due
“ to the Queen of Angels, let us continue the
“ subject we began some weeks ago, touching
“ the sinner’s delay of conversion.”

How terrible does it seem to be summoned into eternity in the immediate exercise of such delusive feelings ! You will not hear, I am persuaded, without emotions of awe, that before the preacher had arrived at the conclusion of his discourse, he suddenly sunk down and died ! It is not for us to determine the reception his spirit met with, in that mysterious state, the secrets of which God has wisely veiled in impenetrable darkness. May you and I when called from earthly scenes, be found under the influence of more exalted hopes than any arising from the power of Mary, and interested in better intercession than “ *her pressing entreaties.*” Speaking of an impenitent sinner, the preacher had said, “ In this deplorable blindness he thus passes his
“ days, leaving, at his death, his coffers full of
“ gold, and himself devoid of the gold of that
“ charity, which alone has currency, in the future
“ life, *without thinking of it he passes into eter-*
“ *nity !.....* After having pronounced those awful
“ words,” adds the narrator, “ the venerable

“preacher sunk down and cast a profound sigh;
“he was instantly carried into the sacristy, and
“expired while the sacrament of Extreme Unc-
“tion was administering to him.*”

Thirdly. *The worship offered to God in the Romish Church is offered in the name of intercessors whom he has not authorized; and in dependence on the merits of sinful mortals.*

The Scriptures tell us that “there is one God,
“and one Mediator between God and men, the
“man Christ Jesus.” But as though God were reluctant to bless, and slow to fulfil his promises, all heaven is to be invoked, according to this system, to plead with him whose compassions are infinite. A few specimens will illustrate the nature of that advocacy upon which the disciples of Rome are taught to rely, and the manner in which it is pleaded.

In the service to be performed on the day dedicated to St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, you are directed to use this language: “O
“God, who hast translated the blessed Dunstan,
“thy high-priest to thy heavenly kingdom:
“grant that we, by his glorious merits, may pass

* “The Laity’s Directory to the Church Service, for the
“year of our Lord, 1825. Published with the Authority of the
“Vicars Apostolic in England.”

“ from hence to never ending joys. Through——
 “ Receive we beseech thee, O Lord, the offerings
 “ thy suppliant servants lay before thee, on this
 “ solemnity of blessed Dunstan, thy confessor
 “ and bishop, requesting that, under his blessed
 “ patronage, they may be delivered from the
 “ snares of their enemies. Through—— Assist
 “ us, O Lord, by the prayers of blessed Dunstan,
 “ thy confessor and bishop, in whose veneration
 “ we have partaken of thy sacraments. Through
 “ ———.”

There is a day dedicated to “ The translation
 “ of the Relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury ;”
 on that day you are instructed to plead *his* ex-
 cellencies before the Almighty, thus: “ O God,
 “ who grantest us to celebrate the Translation of
 “ the relics of the blessed Thomas, thy martyr
 “ and bishop ; we humbly beseech thee that by
 “ his merits and prayers, we may pass from vice
 “ to virtue, and from the prison of his flesh to an
 “ eternal kingdom.—O God, who translated
 “ blessed Thomas, thy martyr and bishop, from
 “ temporal sufferings to eternal joys : grant, we
 “ beseech thee, that we who celebrate his festival,
 “ may, by his patronage, pass to the joys of
 “ heaven. Through——.”

The “ worshipping of angels ” may be illus-

trated by the following sentences from the service appointed for the day of the dedication of St. Michael. "Holy Michael the Archangel, defend us
" in the battle : that we may not perish in the dread-
" ful judgment. Alleluia, Alleluia. The sea shook,
" and the earth trembled when Michael the
" Archangel came down from heaven. Alleluia.
" We offer thee, O Lord, this sacrifice of praise,
" that by the intercession of thy angels, thou
" wouldst mercifully receive the same, and grant
" that it may avail us unto salvation. Through
" ———. We humbly beseech thee, O Lord, that
" being assisted by the intercession of blessed
" Michael, thy archangel, we may receive in spi-
" rit, what we have received with our mouths.
" Through ———."

The extent to which dependance on the intercession of saints and angels is carried, and the degree in which it occupies the attention of the worshipper, will however appear most fully if I lay before you a part of "*the Litanies*." This portion of the service is in the "Missal for the use of the
" Laity " left untranslated. Why this distinction is made I know not ; but you perhaps when you have heard it will think, that such prayers are on the whole as beneficial to the laity in Latin, as they would be in English. It begins thus :

“ O Lord, have mercy upon us. O Christ, have
“ mercy upon us. O Lord, have mercy upon us.
“ O Christ, hear us. O Christ, hearken to us.
“ O God the Father of heaven, have mercy upon
“ us. O God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
“ have mercy upon us. O God the Holy Spirit,
“ have mercy upon us. Holy Trinity, one God,
“ have mercy upon us. Holy Mary, pray for us.
“ Holy mother of God, pray for us. Holy virgin
“ of virgins pray for us. Holy Michael, pray for
“ us. Holy Gabriel, pray for us. Holy Raphael,
“ pray for us. All holy angels and archangels,
“ pray ye for us. All holy orders of blessed
“ spirits, pray ye for us. Holy John the Baptist,
“ pray for us. Holy Joseph, pray for us. All
“ holy Patriarchs and Prophets, pray ye for us.
“ Holy Peter, pray for us. Holy Paul, pray for
“ us. Holy Andrew, pray for us. Holy James,
“ pray for us. Holy John, pray for us. Holy
“ Thomas, pray for us. Holy James, pray for
“ us. Holy Philip, pray for us. Holy Bartho-
“ lomew, pray for us. Holy Matthew, pray for
“ us. Holy Simon, pray for us. Holy Thaddeus,
“ pray for us. Holy Mathias, pray for us. Holy
“ Barnabas, pray for us. Holy Luke, pray for
“ us. Holy Mark, pray for us. All holy Apostles
“ and Evangelists, pray ye for us. All holy

“ disciples of the Lord, pray ye for us. All
“ holy Innocents, pray ye for us. Holy Stephen,
“ pray for us. Holy Lawrence, pray for us.
“ Holy Vincent, pray for us. Holy Fabian and
“ Sebastian, pray ye for us. Holy John and
“ Paul, pray ye for us. Holy Cosma and
“ Damian, pray ye for us. Holy Gervasus and
“ Protasus, pray ye for us. All holy Martyrs,
“ pray ye for us. Holy Sylvester, pray for us.
“ Holy Gregory, pray for us. Holy Ambrose,
“ pray for us. Holy Augustine, pray for us.
“ Holy Jerome, pray for us. Holy Martin, pray
“ for us. Holy Nicolas, pray for us. All Holy
“ Pontiffs and Confessors, pray ye for us. All
“ holy Doctors, pray ye for us. Holy Anthony,
“ pray for us. Holy Benedict, pray for us.
“ Holy Bernard, pray for us. Holy Dominic,
“ pray for us. Holy Francis, pray for us. All
“ holy Priests and Levites, pray ye for us. All
“ holy Monks and Hermits, pray ye for us.
“ Holy Mary Magdalene, pray for us. Holy
“ Lucy, pray for us. Holy Agnes, pray for us.
“ Holy Cæcilia, pray for us. Holy Agatha,
“ pray for us. Holy Catharine, pray for us.
“ Holy Anastasia, pray for us. All holy Virgins
“ and Widows, pray ye for us. All holy men, and
“ holy women of God, intercede ye for us.” If

this recital wearies you, my Christian friends, recollect that these are the devotions of many millions of your fellow men; and the regular services of a community, which arrogates to itself the exclusive right of being called the Church of Christ, and which has shed the blood of thousands for not submitting to its thralldom.

Fourthly. In the Romish Church, *the appointments of Jesus Christ are perverted from their original design.*

On the first of these, the ordinance of Baptism, I do not intend to descant, knowing that my views of it differ from those, of the majority of Protestants in this country, and of many of my present hearers. I am never unwilling to state my thoughts concerning it when a suitable opportunity occurs; but as this does not appear to me to be an eligible season for doing so, I will only give you some of Dr. Milner's ideas on the subject, expressed in his own words. "We have abundant proofs," says this Prelate, "that from
"the frequent and long delays, in the adminis-
"tration of this sacrament, amongst Protestants,
"very many children die without receiving it,
"and that from the negligence of their ministers,
"as to the right matter and the form of words,
"many more children receive it invalidly. Look

“ on the other hand, at the Catholic Church,
“ you will find the same importance still attached
“ to this sacred rite, on the part of the people
“ and the clergy, which is observable in the Acts
“ of the Apostles, and in the writings of the
“ Holy Fathers; the former being ever im-
“ patient to have their children baptized, the
“ latter equally solicitous to administer it in due
“ time, and with the most scrupulous exactness,
“ thus, as matters now stand, the two churches
“ are not upon a level with respect to this first
“ means of sanctification: the members of the
“ one having a much greater moral certainty of
“ the remission of that sin, in which we were all
“ born, and of their having been heretofore ac-
“ tually received into the church of Christ, than
“ the members of the other.”—“ Protestants are
“ forced to have recourse to the tradition of the
“ church, for determining a great number of
“ points, which are left doubtful by the sacred
“ text; particularly with reference to the two
“ sacraments which they acknowledge. From
“ the doctrine and practice of the church alone
“ they learn, that although Christ our pattern
“ was baptized in a river, (Mark i. 9.) and the
“ Ethiopian eunuch was led by St. Philip *into the*
“ *water*, (Acts viii. 38.) for the same purpose,

“ the application of it by infusion or aspersion is
“ valid ; and that although Christ says, ‘ *He that*
“ *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved,’ (Mark
“ xvi. 16.) infants are susceptible of the benefits
“ of baptism, who are incapable of making an
“ act of faith.” *

The erroneous views of Catholics respecting the supper of the Lord require more explanation. Jesus Christ, you are aware, when he was about to evince his love of his disciples, by giving himself as a sacrifice for their sins, set before them bread and wine, and commanded them to eat it in remembrance of him. After his decease, the Apostles observed the injunction themselves, and instructed those who embraced their doctrine to do so likewise ; in order, as they expressed it, to “ shew the Lord’s death till he come.” Now when the Redeemer presented to his followers the bread and wine, he said of the one, “ this is my body,” and of the other “ this is my blood.” The principle on which this phraseology was founded, was we apprehend the same as that which we ordinarily adopt, when we say of a portrait of His Majesty, “ This is the King,” or of a statue of his late revered parent, “ this is George the Third.” The persons to whom his

* End of “ Relig. Controv. p. 154 and 280.

language was addressed could not mistake his meaning ; they could not think that he intended to say more than that the bread and the wine were representations of his body and of his blood, as he was at the time seated at the table with them in health and uninjured. His blood was not yet shed ; his body was not yet broken ; nothing more *could* be meant by him, or understood by them, than that these were emblems of himself, as wounded and slain for their salvation. The doctrine of the Romish Church, founded professedly on this language, however is, that by the act of the priest in consecrating the sacred elements they are literally changed into the Redeemer :—that they cease to be bread and wine when the words *hoc est corpus meum*, have been pronounced, and become the true body and blood of him who died upon the cross. They therefore adore these substances as divine ; account their elevation a real sacrifice for sin, and require them to be received, not as representations of the Saviour, but as the Saviour himself. In “ The “ Laity’s Directory,” a work published annually, under the sanction of the highest Catholic Authorities in this country, there is an address of considerable length, exclusively on this subject. One short extract will shew that this doctrine,

however absurd, is still avowed, and that the utmost importance is still attached to it.

“ Is then Jesus Christ himself rendered really
“ present on our altars by the act of consecration?
“ Is he who was immolated and offered on the
“ cross, really offered from our altars to God,
“ under the exterior appearances of bread and
“ wine? Yes : this is the truth, and the fact, no
“ less real than it is sublime and wonderful.
“ This external sacrifice of the Mass, in which
“ the body and blood of Christ are really offered,
“ under the appearances of bread and wine, as a
“ constant memorial, and continuation of the sa-
“ crifice of the Cross, from which it differs only
“ in the *manner* of offering, was instituted by
“ Jesus Christ, who is a priest for ever after the
“ order of Melchizedek, as an integral and es-
“ sential part of his new law. It was introduced
“ from the beginning, together with all the other
“ doctrines and institutions of Christ, in all
“ places wherever the Apostles and apostolic
“ men established Christianity. It was con-
“ stantly offered as the sacrifice of the body and
“ blood of Christ in all Christian countries
“ throughout the world, from the first establish-
“ ment of Christianity in them to the time of
“ Luther in the sixteenth century. It is now of-
“ fered, and has been continually offered, to this

“ time, as the great Christian sacrifice, by all
 “ Christian Churches of every denomination (ex-
 “ cept the Protestant) who all refer its institution
 “ to Christ himself, the Mediator and Sovereign
 “ High Priest of the New Testament. These
 “ are facts of the highest certainty.

“ If we are Christians we are bound to believe
 “ and observe all the doctrines, precepts and insti-
 “ tutions of Jesus Christ; for in these Christianity
 “ consists. They all rest on the foundation of
 “ the same divine testimony and authority, hence
 “ as the doctrine of the real presence was equally
 “ taught by Christ as the doctrine of the Trinity,
 “ as the sacrifice of the Mass, was equally reveal-
 “ ed and instituted by Christ, as the Sacrament
 “ of Baptism; it is evident that both must be
 “ equally believed and admitted by every Chris-
 “ tian. He who knowingly denies or rejects
 “ one doctrine, or one sacred rite, taught or in-
 “ stituted by Christ, and commanded by him
 “ to be believed and observed, destroys the
 “ very foundation of Christianity in his soul.”*

* This address, which contains some paragraphs of evangelical doctrine; and shows how completely it is possible to neutralize that doctrine by incorporating with it a little human tradition, so as to render it inert or poisonous, is signed, “ WILLIAM, Bishop of Halia, Vicar Apostolic in the London District.”—*Laity's Directory* for 1825.

Who can wonder that men of education in Catholic countries should be prone to infidelity, when the professed ministers of Christ command them thus, to disbelieve the testimony of their senses, and teach them to regard Christianity as a system of wild conceits and superstitious observances!*

* “Of late years the Protestants in France have suffered not a little because they will not acknowledge the real presence of Christ in the consecrated wafer, and worship it as their Saviour. In all Popish countries it is the practice to carry the consecrated host in procession through the streets, in order to be administered to sick or dying persons in their own houses, and whoever happens to meet it must fall down on his knees and worship. If in some instances Englishmen are exempted, it is because they are Englishmen, not because they are Protestants; and even they are expected to shew some mark of reverence, such as touching the hat, in honour of the idol.

“On Corpus Christi Day, it is the custom to carry the host about in solemn procession in great pomp; and though France be not so thoroughly Popish as Spain, Portugal, and Italy, yet all those who reside in the streets through which the procession is to pass, are compelled to decorate their houses, in honour of the idol that is passing by. Now this is nothing less than to compel persons to be guilty of idolatry; for whatever Papists themselves may think and believe upon the subject, those who are not Papists believe that what they are commanded to honour is not God, but a piece of bread; and to compel them to violate their consciences, by honouring in the smallest degree such an idol, is such direct persecution, that were Papists in this country subjected to the tenth part of the hardship, our own Protestant

Fifthly; *The Church of Rome has instituted many ceremonies, and sanctioned many practices, for which there is no foundation in the word of God, and which are quite opposed to the genius of Christianity.*

population would cry out against it, and they would justly do so, as a proceeding unknown and unwarranted by any principle of genuine Christianity.

“ I am aware, that by the constitutional charter, Protestants in France are relieved from the obligation of this idolatrous compliance ; but many have been compelled to it notwithstanding ; and others on their refusal, have been exposed to vexations and sufferings innumerable.

“ Dr. Middleton, who has traced many of the Popish rites up to their heathen original, frankly confesses that he can find nothing in heathenism equal to the Popish adoration of the host, and their subsequent eating of it. ‘ As to that celebrated act of Popish idolatry,’ says he ‘ the adoration of the host, I must confess that I cannot find the least resemblance of it in any part of the pagan worship ; and as oft as I have been standing at Mass, and seen the whole congregation prostrate on the ground, in the humblest posture of adoring at the elevation of this consecrated piece of bread ; I could not help reflecting on a passage of Tully, where, speaking of the absurdity of the heathens in the choice of their gods, he says, ‘ was any man ever so mad, as to take that which he feeds upon for a God ?’ (*Cic.de Nat. Deor.* 3.) This was an extravagance left for Popery alone, and what an old Roman could not but think too gross, even for Egyptian idolatry to swallow, is now become the principal part of worship, and the distinguished article of faith, in the creed of modern Rome.”—
“ *The Protestant*,” vol. ii. p. 62, 67.

We cannot enumerate all these inventions this evening, but one or two of them may suffice as a sample of the whole. The first that I shall mention is *the practice of offering prayers for the dead.*

Jesus Christ when hanging on the Cross promised the dying thief, who sought his mercy, that on *that* day he should be with him in Paradise. Paul desired to depart, that he might be with Christ; and felt an exhilarating confidence that he himself and his beloved brethren should, when “absent from the body,” be “present with the Lord.” But the doctrine of the Romish Clergy is, that besides heaven and hell there is a middle state, to which the souls of the greater part of Christians go when they leave the world, there to expiate the remains of guilt. Not pure enough to enter at once into the society of the blessed; not guilty enough to deserve eternal punishment in the bottomless abyss; they enter Purgatory,—a prison,—a place of torment,—in which to be purified by temporary pains, and prepared for the beatific vision. The rigour of their punishment may, however, be mitigated, and the duration of their captivity shortened, through the efficacy of Masses said on their behalf on earth. The widow and the orphan, the

friend and the neighbour, are conjured therefore to have compassion on the soul of the deceased Catholic: and by contributions to that powerful advocate the Priest, to induce him to present the necessary intercessions.

You would perhaps like to be made acquainted with the nature of the petitions which it is thought expedient to offer for the departed Christian. The following sentences are taken from the office prescribed for the day of his death.

“ O God, whose property it is always to have
“ mercy and to spare, we humbly present our
“ prayers to thee in behalf of the soul of thy ser-
“ vant N. which thou hast this day called out of
“ the world; beseeching thee not to deliver it
“ into the hands of the enemy, nor to forget it for
“ ever; but command it to be received by the
“ holy angels, and to be carried into Paradise;
“ that as it believed and hoped in thee, it may be
“ delivered from the pain of hell, and inherit ever-
“ lasting life. Lord Jesus Christ, King of
“ Glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful de-
“ parted from the flames of hell, and from the
“ deep pit. Deliver them from the lion’s mouth,
“ lest hell swallow them, lest they fall into dark-
“ ness; and let the standard bearer, Saint Mi-
“ chael bring them into the holy light, which thou

“promisedst of old to Abraham and his posterity.
 “We offer thee, O Lord, a sacrifice of praise
 “and prayers ; accept them in behalf of the souls
 “we commemorate this day ; and let them pass
 “from death to life.” Have mercy O Lord we
 “beseech thee on the soul of thy servant, N. for
 “which we offer this victim of praise, humbly
 “beseeching thy Majesty, that by this propiti-
 “atory sacrifice he may arrive at eternal rest.”

It is not however supposed that these supplications avail very speedily, for on the 3d, 7th, or 30th day after the decease, the whole is to be repeated, with some slight alterations, and new entreaties added, on behalf of the soul, “that if
 “any stains of the corruptions of this world still
 “stick to it, they may be washed away by thy
 “forgiving mercy.” And there is remembrance again made of sins every year. On the anniversary of the decease or burial, a repetition of these rites is prescribed, with importunate requests that the soul “may be admitted to the fellowship of
 “the Saints,” and “being purified by this sacrifice, may obtain both pardon and eternal
 “rest.”*

* Roman Missal, Masses for the Dead.

That this doctrine brings “no small gain to the craftsmen,” will be readily perceived, if it be considered that remuneration

Many other rites are also practised in their worship, which are destitute of the slightest

corresponding with the circumstances is extorted for every Mass; and that affectionate relatives, whether rich or poor, when suffering under recent bereavement, will be ready to do their utmost for the relief of the dear deceased. It would be easy to illustrate this idea, by citing some of those narratives, which Protestant writers on this subject have given, in large abundance; but nothing can show more forcibly the address with which it is reduced to a system, than the Rules of "The Purgatorian Society," which was established at Dublin, in the year 1813. In *The Protestant* they are given at length, as quoted from "the Rev. J. Carlile's Examination of the arguments for the pre-eminence of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy." A few of them shall be subjoined here:—"Rule 1. That the affairs of this Institution shall be regulated by the Superior, Rectors, and six of the Members who compose the Office for the Dead, who shall attend every Wednesday night, at half-past eight o'clock, throughout the year, at the above named place, or any other place which may be hereafter appointed, and there with attention and devotion, recite the Office for the Dead, agreeable to the intension that shall then be mentioned.—Rule 2. That every well-disposed Catholic, wishing to contribute to the relief of the suffering souls in Purgatory, shall pay *one penny per week*, which shall be appropriated to the procuring of Masses to be offered up for the repose of the souls of the deceased parents, relations, and friends of all the subscribers to the Institution in particular, and the faithful departed in general.—Rule 6. That the spiritual benefits of this Institution shall be conferred in the following manner, viz. Each

scriptural authority, the description of which would shew still further how completely the

“ subscriber shall be entitled to an Office at the time of their
 “ death, another at the expiration of a month, and one at the
 “ end of twelve months after their decease, also the benefit of
 “ Masses which shall be procured to be offered by the money
 “ arising from subscriptions, and which shall be extended to
 “ their parents, relations, and friends, in the following order,
 “ that is to say, their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles,
 “ aunts, and if married, husbands, wives, and children, if they
 “ have any departed who lived to maturity.” The founders of
 this Society, themselves Romish Clergy, represent themselves as
 “ inviting all tender-hearted Catholics, who have a feeling sen-
 “ sibility of the duty they owe their departed parents, relations
 “ and friends, who probably may stand more in need of their
 “ commiseration at present, than at any period of their life
 “ time, to assist in the charitable and pious purpose of shorten-
 “ ing the duration of their sufferings by the most easy means
 “ imaginable !” *By the most easy means imaginable !* And
 what are these ? To raise money by a penny a week subscrip-
 tion to procure Masses ! To procure them from whom ? From
 the Clergy ! To pay the man who professed during the life of
 the deceased to be his best friend, his spiritual father, to present
 prayers for his deliverance from torments ; prayers which would
 be certainly efficacious to mitigate his sufferings, but prayers
 which he will not offer till he is paid for them ! In the same spirit,
 in various parts of the Laity’s Directory, donations are solicited for
 Chapels encumbered with debt, and this sort of encouragement
 held out to contributors. “ The benefactors are recommended every
 “ Sunday to the prayers of the congregation ; and on the first
 “ Sunday in the month, Mass, with benediction of the blessed

precepts of men are substituted for the commandments of God. On the day which they call Ash Wednesday, for example, *ashes* are applied in the form of a cross, to the heads of the faithful, the ashes having been first sprinkled with holy water, and prepared for the operation by the following prayer. “ O Almighty and Eternal God,
 “ spare those that repent, shew mercy to those
 “ that humbly intreat thee, and vouchsafe to send
 “ from Heaven thy holy angel to bless and sanc-
 “ tify these ashes, that they may be a wholesome
 “ remedy to all who humbly call upon thy holy
 “ name, and conscious of their sins accuse them-
 “ selves, and deplore their crimes in sight of thy
 “ divine Majesty, or humbly and earnestly have
 “ recourse to thy sovereign bounty; and grant,
 “ by our calling on thy most holy name, that
 “ whoever shall be touched by these ashes for the
 “ remission of their sins, may receive health of
 “ body and defence of soul. Through—— ”*

“ Sacrament, is offered up for the benefactors of the Chapel,
 “ *both living and dead.*”—N. B. The Rev. B. B. engages to
 “ offer up the Masses of two Sundays every year for the bene-
 “ factors of this Chapel, and likewise four Masses in the year
 “ for all who lie in the burying ground belonging to it.”

* Roman Missal. Ash Wednesday.

One more specimen will suffice to illustrate this part of the subject. On the feast of "the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary," the following supplications are offered, in the presence of the congregation, for a blessing on *Candles*, an ample assortment of which are brought together to receive the heavenly benediction. "Holy Lord, Father Almighty, and
" Eternal God, who didst create all things out
" of nothing, and by the labour of the bees following thy commands, hast brought this liquor
" to the perfection of wax ; and who on this day
" didst accomplish the desire of the righteous
" Simeon, we humbly beseech thee, that by the
" invocation of thy most holy name, and by the
" intercession of blessed Mary, ever a Virgin,
" whose festival we this day devoutly celebrate,
" and by the prayers of all thy Saints, thou
" wouldst vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these
" candles, for the service of men, and for the good
" of their bodies and souls in all places ; and that
" thou wouldest please, mercifully to hear from
" thy holy temple, and from the throne of thy
" Majesty, the prayers of this thy people, who desire to carry them in their hands with reverence,
" and with sacred hymns to praise thy name, and
" shew mercy to all that cry out unto thee, whom

“ thou hast redeemed by the precious blood of
“ thy Son who liveth.” After many similar
prayers have been offered for a “ heavenly bene-
diction” on the candles, “ the Priest having put
“ incense in the Censer, sprinkles the candles
“ with holy water. After fuming them he dis-
“ tributes them to the faithful, who receive them
“ kneeling, first *kissing the candle*, and then the
“ *hand of the Priest.*”*

Besides these things which relate immediately to the worship of the Church of Rome, there are many pernicious customs intimately connected with the system ; but if I were at this time to enumerate them I should presume too much on your patience. We cannot now enter upon the inexhaustible topic of sacred relics, the exhibition of which in the Churches on the Continent, so frequently excites the wonder and risibility of British travellers.† Nor must we stay to speak of the cruel policy which immures in Convents and Monasteries, thousands of both sexes, who might prove ornaments to society ; imposing on them vows of perpetual celibacy, and separating

* Rom. Missal. Purif. of the B. V. Mary.

† “ I have before me a catalogue of some hundreds of relics,
“ which are objects of Popish devotion in several Churches in
“ France, Spain, and Italy. Many of them are too gross to

them for ever from their relatives and friends.* Nor can we now describe the nature of those fasts and other corporeal observances, which the Romish Church encourages, and in attention to which a considerable part of its boasted sanctity

“ appear in a modern publication. The least offensive are the
 “ arms, fingers, legs and toes of certain Saints; and some of
 “ them must have had as many limbs as a centipede; for in
 “ Flanders, Spain and France there are no fewer than eight arms
 “ of St. Matthew, which would of course produce forty fingers,
 “ and these would enrich as many Churches. The author of
 “ one catalogue in my possession, assures his readers, that he
 “ himself had seen three arms of St. Luke; and he could not
 “ tell how many Saint Thomas a Becket had. Such relics are
 “ considered the treasure of the Churches to which they belong,
 “ and in fact they bring no small gain to the Church, as great
 “ sums are received annually from devout pilgrims, who come
 “ hundreds of miles to feast their eyes and warm their devotion
 “ by looking upon those limbs which would have been more ho-
 “ noured by being allowed to rest quietly in the earth. These
 “ pious relics are solemnly certified to be what they are said to
 “ be; and many have proved themselves genuine by most stu-
 “ pendous miracles; all which is piously believed by their de-
 “ vout worshippers.”—*The Protestant*, vol. ii. p. 10.

* Some idea may be formed of the extent to which this is carried, from the fact, that the number of Monks in Spain was, according to the latest account the writer has been able to obtain, above sixty thousand; and of Nuns more than thirty thousand. In France, he is informed, in the year 1820, there were 11,752 females in these communities.

consists. But there is one practice so prominent and so objectionable, that we must not pass over it ; I mean the granting of *Indulgencies*.

An Indulgence is, according to the advocates of the Popish system,—not what Protestants represent it to be. This is stated plainly ; and it is almost the only thing said on the subject that is not vague and indistinct. The sale of this sort of ecclesiastical merchandize having been exposed by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, and reprobated by their successors ; every effort has been made by the adherents of Rome to palliate the abuse, and overwhelm its opponents with charges of misrepresentation. To say that it only affords remission from canonical penance is *heresy*, for that is a proposition uttered by Luther when beginning to grope his way out of the dark dungeon to which he had been accustomed, but formally condemned by Leo the Tenth. To say that it is an offer of deliverance from everlasting punishment on the performance of the stipulations on which it is given, is on the other hand, to declare the man who issues it, an Antinomian of the vilest class. It is hard to find a middle path and render it perceptible.. That an indulgence is an offer of *pardon* on certain terms cannot be denied ; it is declared on the face of

the instrument. That it is a pardon for all the sins of the Catholic who submits to its conditions, is also affirmed so fully in the proposals, that it cannot be said, some crimes are too malignant for its potency. Yet we are told “ it is not and “ does not include the pardon of any sin at all, “ little or great, past, present or to come, or the “ eternal punishment due to it, as all Protes- “ tants suppose. Hence if the pardon of sin is “ mentioned in any indulgence, this means “ nothing more than the remission of the *tem- “ porary punishments* annexed to such sin.* It is only the remission of *temporary punishments* then ! Certainly it is not ! The everlasting punishment was annulled before ! The blood of Jesus Christ had sufficient efficacy to relieve from that, when baptism had united the individual to the number of the faithful ; but he was exposed to *temporary* punishment still. It does not then remit all ; it only remits that part that was not previously remitted ! “ The Catholic “ Church,” says Dr. Milner, “ teaches, that the “ same is still the common course of God’s “ mercy and wisdom, in the forgiveness of sins “ committed after baptism ; since she has formally “ condemned the proposition, that ‘ every peni-

* End of Religious Controversy, p. 304.

“tent sinner, who after the grace of justification,
 “obtains the remission of his *guilt* and eternal
 “punishment, obtains also the remission of all
 “temporal punishment.’ The essential guilt
 “and eternal punishment of sin, she declares,
 “can only be expiated by the precious merits of
 “our Redeemer, Jesus Christ; but a certain
 “temporal punishment God reserves for the pe-
 “nitent himself to endure, ‘lest the easiness of
 “his pardon should make him careless about re-
 “lapsing into sin.’ Hence *satisfaction* for this
 “temporal punishment has been instituted by
 “Christ, as a part of the sacrament of penance;
 “and hence a Christian life as the Council has
 “said above ‘ought to be a penitential life.’
 “This Council at the same time declares, that
 “this very satisfaction for temporal punishment,
 “is only efficacious through Jesus Christ. Never-
 “theless, as the promise of Christ to the Apos-
 “tles, St. Peter in particular, and to the succes-
 “sors of the Apostles, is unlimited; WHAT-
 “SOEVER *you shall loose upon earth shall be*
 “*loosed also in heaven*: hence the Church be-
 “lieves and teaches, that her jurisdiction attends
 “to this very satisfaction, so as to be able to
 “remit it wholly or partially, in certain circum-
 “stances, by what is called an INDULGENCE. ’*

* Ut sup. p. 306.

Thus you perceive, whether the proposed benefit be sold for money, or earned by pilgrimages, whether the terms be a Crusade against Saracens, or a Campaign against Heretics; the doctrine of indulgencies proceeds on the principle that the pardon granted to the Christian by his adhesion to Jesus Christ is incomplete. It is, we are told, “not barely to a relaxation of the canonical penance enjoined by the church, but also an actual remission by God himself, of the whole or part of the temporal punishment due to it in his sight.”* The salvation which the gospel proclaims to every one that believeth, is therefore but partial, without that additional absolution which is to be procured from the Romish Clergy. And thus the commission of sin is encouraged by the easy terms on which it is proposed to furnish the remission, not indeed of eternal punishment, but of temporary,—the punishment arising from affliction before death and purgatory after it,—the only punishment which a faithful Catholic has to fear.

It may not be known to all present, that an indulgence has recently been published by the Roman Pontiff: you will probably like to hear the terms in which it is couched, though it is not

* Ut Supra. p. 307.

very probable that you will avail yourselves of it, by visiting Rome, according to its suggestion.

“ LEO BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS
“ OF GOD, *to all the faithful of Christ who shall*
“ *see these presents, Health and Apostolical Bene-*
“ *diction.* In the merciful dispensations of the
“ Lord, it is at length granted to our humility,
“ to announce to you with joy that the period is
“ at hand, when what we regretted was omitted
“ at the commencement of the present century,
“ in consequence of the direful calamities of the
“ times, is to be happily observed according to
“ the established custom of our forefathers ; for
“ that most propitious year, intitled to the utmost
“ religious veneration, is approaching, when
“ Christians from every region of the earth,
“ will resort to this our holy city, and the Chair
“ of blessed Peter, and when the most abundant
“ treasures of reconciliation and grace will be
“ offered as means of salvation to all the faithful
“ disposed to perform the exercises of piety
“ which are prescribed. During this year, which
“ we truly call the acceptable time, and the time
“ of salvation, we congratulate you that a
“ favourable occasion is presented, when, after
“ the miserable accumulation of disasters, under

“ which we have groaned, we may strive to
“ renew all things in Christ, by the salutary
“ atonement of all Christian people. We have
“ therefore resolved in virtue of the authority
“ given to us by heaven, fully to unlock that
“ sacred treasure, composed of the merits, suf-
“ ferings, and virtues of Christ our Lord, and of
“ his Virgin Mother, and of all the saints, which
“ the Author of Human Salvation has intrusted
“ to our dispensation.

“ In this it becomes us to magnify the abund-
“ ant riches of the divine clemency, by which
“ Christ, preventing us with the blessings of
“ sweetness, so willed the infinite power of his
“ merits, to be diffused through the parts of his
“ mystical body, that they by reciprocal co-
“ operation, and by the most wholesome com-
“ munication of advantages flowing from faith,
“ which worketh by charity, might mutually
“ assist each other: and by the immense price
“ of the blood of the Lord, and for his sake and
“ virtue, as also by the merits and suffrages of
“ the saints, might gain the remission of the
“ temporal punishment which the Fathers of the
“ Council of Trent, have taught is not always
“ entirely remitted, as is the case in baptism,
“ by the sacrament of penance.

“ Let the earth, therefore, hear the words of
“ our mouth, and let the whole world joyfully
“ hearken to the voice of the priestly trumpet
“ sounding forth to God’s people the Sacred
“ Jubilee. We proclaim that the year of atone-
“ ment and pardon, of redemption and grace, of
“ remission and indulgence, is arrived ; in which
“ we know that those benefits which the old law,
“ the messenger of things to come, brought
“ every fiftieth year to the Jewish people, are
“ renewed in a much more sacred manner by
“ the accumulation of spiritual blessings through
“ him by whom came peace and truth. For if
“ the lands that had been sold, and the property
“ that had passed into other hands, were re-
“ claimed in that salutary year, so we recover
“ *now*, by the infinite liberality of God, the vir-
“ tues, and merits, and gifts, of which we are
“ despoiled by sin. If then the claims of human
“ bondage ceased to exist, so at present, by
“ shaking off the most galling yoke of diabolical
“ subjection, we are called to the liberty of God’s
“ children, to that liberty which Christ has
“ granted us. If, in fine, by the precept of the
“ law pecuniary debts were then pardoned to
“ debtors, and they became discharged from
“ every bond,—we are also exonerated from a

“ much heavier debt of sins, and are released by
“ the divine mercy, from the punishments incur-
“ red by them.

“ Eagerly wishing that so many and such
“ great advantages may accrue to your souls,
“ and confidently invoking God, the giver of all
“ good gifts, through the bowels of his mercy,
“ in conformity to the exigency of the prescribed
“ period, and the pious institutes of the Roman
“ Pontiffs our predecessors, and walking in their
“ footsteps,—we, with the assent of our venerable
“ Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman
“ Church, do, by the authority of Almighty God,
“ and of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul,
“ and by our own, for the glory of God himself,
“ the exaltation of the Catholic Church, and the
“ sanctification of all Christian people, ordain
“ and publish the universal and most solemn
“ Jubilee, to commence in this holy city from
“ the first vespers of the Nativity of our most
“ holy Saviour Jesus Christ next ensuing, and
“ to continue during the whole year, 1825,
“ during which year of the Jubilee, we merci-
“ fully give and grant in the Lord a plenary
“ indulgence, remission, and pardon of all their
“ sins, to all the faithful of Christ, of both sexes,
“ truly penitent and confessing their sins, and

“ receiving the holy communion, who shall devoutly visit the churches of blessed Peter and Paul, as also of St. John Lateran, and St. Mary Major of this city, for thirty successive or uninterrupted (whether natural or ecclesiastical) days, to be counted, to wit, from the first vespers of one day, until the evening twilight of the day following, provided they be Romans or inhabitants of this city; but if they be pilgrims, or otherwise strangers, if they shall do the same for fifteen days, and shall pour forth their pious prayers to God, for the exaltation of the Holy Church, the extirpation of heresies, concord of Catholic Princes, and the safety and tranquillity of Christian people.”

There is much more in the same spirit. The Pontiff goes on to enact that if “any on their way should be hindered by sickness *or death*, they shall not lose their labour, but become partakers of the aforesaid indulgence and remission, as fully as if they had actually visited the said churches, on the days appointed.” He refutes any objections to the journey drawn from its difficulties or dangers, by arguing that “there is in reserve what will most amply remunerate

“ you for every inconvenience and hardship.” He urges the rich augmentation of faith and charity which must arise from a visit to the holy city ; the devotional feelings that must be excited in the pilgrim when he comes to prostrate himself before the tombs of Peter and Paul “ and kiss “ their chains more precious than gold and gems ;” and the impossibility of refraining from tears, when “ perceiving the cradle of Christ, he shall “ recollect the infant Jesus crying in the manger ; “ or saluting the sacred instruments of our Lord’s “ passion, shall meditate on the Redeemer of “ the world hanging on the cross.” And then he calls on all Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops, to stimulate their people to the undertaking ; and adds, “ To you it belongs to explain with perspicuity the power of indulgences : “ what is their efficacy, not only in remission of “ the canonical penance, but also of the temporal “ punishment due to the divine justice for past “ sin ; and what succour is afforded out of this “ heavenly treasure, from the merits of Christ “ and his saints, to such as have departed real “ penitents in God’s love, yet before they had “ duly satisfied by fruits worthy of penance for “ sin of commission and omission, and are now

“purifying in the fire of purgatory, that an entrance may be opened for them into the eternal country where nothing defiled is admitted.” *

Now, my brethren, recollect the leading ideas that have been advanced this evening, and observe the consequences—the dismal consequences, that result from a departure from the Christian rule of faith and practice. See how far the poor Papist has been led from every thing resembling the Christianity of the Scriptures, by taking tradition and the interpretation of the Church as his spiritual directory! See how completely the unwritten accompaniment has superseded and destroyed the effect of the written document! He recites his supplications, or listens while they are recited by others, in a language which he cannot understand, and which he never expects to acquire! Much of his worship he offers, not to the God that made him, and on whom he is dependent, but to saints or angels,—to the mother of our Lord, or to some canonized priest of ancient times! When he approaches his Holy Maker, he does so, in the name of sinful mortals like himself, who needed pardoning mercy for their own transgressions, and whom God has never appointed to the me-

* “The Laity’s Directory, for 1825.”

diatorial office ! He attends to ceremonial rites, bearing the name of ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ, but perverted from their original design, and debased by superstitious additions ! He venerates innumerable fables ; he submits to innumerable impositions ; he observes innumerable prescripts ; but terror still haunts him. When disease oppresses his frame and wastes his spirits, and physicians say that the case is hopeless, he raises his thoughts to heaven, but trembles at the prospect of arrest, and long imprisonment in the purgatorial regions. He now sinks so rapidly that it is evident his final change approaches ; but there is a ceremonial for death as well as for life, and the priest is hastened to the bedside to administer extreme unction, that he may be accurately and fully prepared for eternity. He wishes to repeat his entreaties to his relatives to be merciful to his soul ; and to implore them not to withhold those subsidies without the payment of which it is fruitless to expect that the man whom he has called his Father and treated as his friend, will offer potent masses to withdraw his spirit from the gloomy dungeon into which he is entering ; but his weakness increases ; his speech fails ; the request is inaudible ; he thinks of Purgatory, and dies !

And why is all this, but because he feels and acts in a manner consistent with his principles? He has been taught that the Scriptures are insufficient to guide him in the way of God. He has been taught to bow to human authority in matters of religion. He does so: and this is the result.

Perhaps you think it possible to hold the principles and yet not go so far in practice. So it is; but it must be at the expence of consistency. If once you admit the interference of human authority in the worship and service of God, you cannot consistently refuse to go all the lengths of the most subservient Papist. If you practice any religious ceremony, not because it is sanctioned by the Scripture, but because it is sanctioned by wise and holy men; if you believe any doctrine not because the word of God declares it, but because it has been usually believed among your religious connexions; if you consent to surrender your conscience to the controul of fellow-mortals; the arguments you must employ to justify this prostration of spirit, are arguments which Catholics will turn against you, and with which they may batter to the ground your unfortified tenement. But if you take the Scriptures as your all-sufficient rule; if you believe what

they reveal, observe what they enjoin, and walk according to their guidance, God commands no more, and man has no right to censure. Worshipping God in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh, your heart and life will be regulated by the dictates of the plainest wisdom, and must be approved by him, by whose spirit the sacred oracles were inspired, when he shall return to judge assembled generations.

One Mediator, God has appointed to stand between himself and guilty men. Our necessities require no more, and no other can be accepted. The blood which Jesus shed on Calvary has made full reconciliation for all the sins of his genuine disciples. He is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." "By him we all have access, through one spirit unto the Father."

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men have indeed "a shew of wisdom" "in will worship and humility and neglecting" "of the body;" but if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why should ye be subject to them? "As ye have

therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him."

LECTURE III.

ON ITS TYRANNY.

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“ I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”—*Acts* xx. 29.

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I HOPE to be this evening the means of exciting in your hearts new gratitude to God, for those merciful arrangements of his providence, that have freed you from the tyranny by which your forefathers were long enslaved, and under which many millions of your fellow men are now groaning. Accustomed as we have been from our youth to the enjoyment of religious freedom, we do not sufficiently realize its value. It seems to us so natural that we forget that it is a privilege ; so necessary, that we are ready to consider it a thing of course. But, a little reflection on the character of the papal system will teach us, that if we have reason when we approach the throne

of the Almighty to thank him for food and raiment, for health and social comforts, we have yet greater cause to acknowledge the distinguishing goodness, by which he has exempted us from the cruel bondage which the court of Rome imposes on all its votaries, and on all within the sphere of its baneful influence.

I have no wish to calumniate either the dead or the living; nor do I desire to excite hostilities against any of my species. But mischief may sometimes be prevented by the exposure of crimes already committed, and when this is the case, such exposure becomes a duty. The welfare of society requires that a witness in a court of justice should faithfully unfold the truth, though his doing so may be injurious to the reputation of the accused. The same principle should lead us when the evil tendency of any system can be illustrated from facts, to hold up those facts to public notice, that others may be cautioned against its influence. Now I do fear it may be proved,—I say I *fear*, for I had rather it were otherwise, and it is by tardy and reluctant steps that I have arrived at the conviction,—I do fear it may be proved that tyranny is a constituent part of the popish system: not a mere accident;—not a circumstance casually

arising ;—but a consequence of its first principles,—an essential of its nature. "

Those of you who favoured me with your attention when the first of these Lectures was delivered, will remember that I then represented the leading features of Popery to be three: the first, The insufficiency of the scriptures to be the Christian rule of faith and practice; the second, The inherent right of the Romish Clergy to supply the deficiency, and the third, The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over all other ministers and all Christian people. The discourse of last Lord's day evening was intended to illustrate the effects of the first of these principles; by shewing in the rites and ceremonies of the Romish Church, how far men are likely to depart from an original institute, if they cease to be regulated by written documents, and are guided by reports transmitted from age to age, and the authoritative interpretations of interested men. The subject of this evening will illustrate the second of these principles; it will shew how far the assumption of right on the part of the Romish Clergy to have dominion over the faith of their people, has led them to oppress, to torment, and to destroy.

Take a view of the tyranny of this system

then, in the first place as operating on its own adherents; and in the second place as exerting its influence on those who do not acknowledge its authority.

If you consider it with reference to its own votaries, I think you will perceive that despotism was never in any other instance carried so far; —that no other slavery was ever so finished, so systematic. The most tyrannical eastern princes have contented themselves with the homage of the body; but the clergy of the Romish Church require the prostration of the soul! Other despots have imperiously controlled the actions of men; but these domineer over thought and feeling.

In order to justify these assertions, I must beg you to remark in the first place, that *Popery requires belief without evidence, and, in some cases, in opposition to known fact.*

An adherent of this system is bound to believe that the books of the Old and New Testaments, are of divine origin; not because he is acquainted with those arguments which may be adduced to prove this, but *because the Church believes it.* He is bound to believe the Messiahship of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and many other things which are clearly taught in the

inspired writings; not because he sees that they are taught there, but *because the Church believes them*. In these instances, the sentiments enforced are true; but to require a man to believe them, while he is ignorant of sufficient evidence of their truth, is tyrannical. But what shall we say of compulsion to believe on the authority of the church, those doctrines, of the truth of which the church can have no evidence herself? To what slavery is he reduced who is commanded to believe a proposition against which he knows many arguments, but for which he knows none;—a proposition the reverse of which is testified by his reason, and his senses? He sees before him bread and wine; the church confesses that it is bread and wine, and it would be unjustifiable in him to believe any thing else concerning it.—The Priest recites a form of words.—It is now at his peril to believe that it is bread and wine any longer. He may recollect that it *was* bread and wine, but though no alteration in it is perceptible, he must not think that it is so now. His sight, his smell, his taste, testify that it *is* bread and wine, but if he believes that it is bread and wine, he is a heretic! What reason then has he to believe that it is not bread and wine? Only this,—the church teaches that

it is not, but that it is become the body and blood of Christ! If endeavouring to reconcile the required adoration with his own perceptions he adopts the sentiment of some of the first Reformers, and says it is bread and wine, but Christ is in it as fire is in heated iron, this is not sufficient; he has imbibed an error which he must unreservedly abjure. In opposition to the testimony of his senses, and in opposition to the declaration of Paul that Christians in the sacred supper “*eat the bread;*”* the church requires him to believe that what was bread, is bread no longer; but is actually transmuted into the substance of him who died on the cross and dwells in heaven.†

Nor is it only in matters purely religious that an adherent of the Romish faith must surrender his judgment to the regulation of the clergy. Many of his speculations in philosophy will seem to them to require their controul. He may have spent much time in scientific investigations; but if the result of his inquiries should appear to the priesthood irreconcilable with any article of

* 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28.

† “Our adversaries are perfectly aware, that we firmly believe, as an article of faith, that *there is no bread nor wine,*”
“but Christ alone, true God, as well as man present in it.”

End of Relig. Controv. p. 264.

faith, he must at their mandate renounce his own convictions, and adopt the opinions of men who know nothing of the matter. The well-known history of Galileo may illustrate this truth. Galileo, a man of genius superior to most of his contemporaries, embraced the system of astronomy which is now generally received by scientific men. He thought that the earth moved round the sun, in opposition to the opinion then generally entertained, that the sun moved round the earth. A charge of heresy was therefore brought against him. His sentiments were declared to be incompatible with Christian truth. He accordingly was compelled in order to save his life, to abjure on his knees the doctrine he had previously maintained, and to swear among many other things, "I always have believed, and do now believe, and by the aid of God, I will in future believe, every thing which the holy, catholic, and apostolic, Roman Church doth hold, preach, and teach."

Now it is easy to perceive, that all this arises spontaneously from the fundamental principles to which we have referred. For if it be true that God has constituted the Church a living interpreter of his word, and authoritative judge in all religious matters, it naturally follows that its de-

cisions are final. To assign the reasons on which its declarations are founded, may be inconvenient, and must be unnecessary; their production cannot add authority to the determinations of the supreme arbiter, but may if not evidently adequate, occasion their propriety to be questioned. He who trusts his own judgment in these circumstances, in preference to the decision of the church, is guilty of rebellion against legitimate authority; and exposes himself to all the punishment which that infallible tribunal may think it expedient to inflict.

Again: *The tyranny of the Popish system appears in the propensity of its chiefs, to withhold from the people, the means of knowledge.*

It is not surprising that it should have been the uniform policy of the Romish Clergy to keep their adherents in great ignorance of religious truth. The less they knew, the less were they likely to detect the fallacy of those pretensions of which they were the victims. With the scriptures in their hands they might have contrasted the edifice they were taught to venerate as the church of Christ, with the original model contained in the book of inspiration; without them they would naturally take it for granted that the conformity was exact. Had their acquaintance

with the formularies of devotion, and the minutiae of belief, been extensive and accurate; they might have compared one part with another, and questioned the truth of some dogma or the propriety of some usage. Nothing corresponded so well with the paramount authority of the theological guides, as ignorance and implicit faith on the part of the people.

Hence it has been taught in the plainest terms, by many of their most renowned doctors, that a man may believe, as far as belief is important, not only without knowledge of the evidence by which the tenet he believes might be sustained, but also without acquaintance with the tenet itself. The *implicit faith* taught by the schoolmen is consistent with the most perfect ignorance of the thing believed. If he believes that all that the Church believes is true, that is sufficient: though he knows not what the articles of its faith are, yet he is to be considered a believer in each of them. Nay he may believe two contradictory propositions at the same time the one *explicitly* the other *implicitly*: the one is his own opinion which he is not aware that the church disbelieves; the other is the faith of the church, with which he is not acquainted, but which is to

be reckoned his faith, because he believes that all that the church believes is true.*

* "To believe implicitly," says Bona, "is to believe in general universally all that holy mother church believes; so as to dissent from her in nothing, nor disbelieve any of her articles. And though it be convenient (*licet opportunum sit*) for all, not only to believe all the articles implicitly, but even some of them, since the coming of Christ explicitly; yet it is not necessary (*non tamen est necessarium*) for all, especially the common people, to believe them all explicitly. It is proper rather for those who assume the office of teaching and preaching as they have the cure of souls." Further to shew the wonderful virtues and efficacy of such a faith, another of the doctors, Gabriel Byel, maintains that "if he who implicitly believes the church, should think, misled by natural reason, that the Father is greater than the Son, and existed before him, or that the three persons are things locally distinct from one another, or the like, he is not a heretic, nor sins, provided he do not defend his error pertinaciously. For he believes what he does believe, because he thinks that the church believes so, subjecting his opinion to the faith of the church. For though his opinion be erroneous, his opinion is not his faith, nay his faith, in contradiction to his opinions, is the faith of the church. What is still more, this *implicit faith*, not only defends from heresy and sin, but even constitutes merit in heterodoxy itself, and preserves in that merit one who forms a most heterodox opinion, because he thinks the church believes so." Thus far Byel. It is then of no consequence what a man's explicit faith be; he may be an Arian, a Socinian, an Anthropomorphite, a Polytheist, in short, any thing; he cannot err whilst he has an implicit faith in the church. This they give as their explanation of that ar-

This doctrine has not indeed been universally taught by the Romish Clergy ; but it has been advanced by men of the greatest repute among them, both in the schools and in their writings, and was never censured by any Pope or Council. And it appears in the body at large in its practical results. It accords with the practice of reciting the public prayers, in an unknown language ; and with the prevalent opposition to the unrestricted circulation of the book of God.

The systematic manner in which the Romish Clergy keep their people in ignorance of all that

ticle of creed, " I believe in the holy catholic church ;" though agreeably to this interpretation, there should have been no other article in the creed. This point alone supersedes every other, and is the quintessence of all. *Implicit faith* has been sometimes ludicrously styled *fides carbonaria*, from the noted story of one who examining an ignorant collier on his religious principles, asked him what it was that he believed. He answered, " I believe what the church believes." The other rejoined, " What then does the church believe?" He replied readily, " The church believes what I believe." The other desirous if possible, to bring him to particulars, once more resumes his inquiry. " Tell me then I pray you, what it is which you and the church both believe." The only answer the collier could give was, " Why truly, Sir, the church and I both believe the same thing." This is implicit faith in perfection, and in the estimation of some celebrated doctors, the sum of necessary and saving knowledge in a Christian."-- *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History by G. Campbell, D.D. Lect. 23.*

we are accustomed to urge against the Papal system, and of every thing that is adapted to enlighten then respecting its abuses, is perhaps not so generally known, and particularly deserves exposure. When Leo X. excommunicated Luther, he prohibited the perusal of his writings, under the penalty of excommunication. Succeeding Pontiffs excommunicated heretics generally, and with them those who read their books. Still the darkness was not sufficiently dense ; and therefore Clement VIII. published a decree that all books written by Catholics since the year 1515—the year in which Luther began to declaim against indulgences—should undergo a revision ; that every thing in them which was not conformable with the doctrine of the Church of Rome should be retrenched, and that such additions should be made as might seem expedient to the correctors. The *index expurgatorius*—a catalogue of forbidden authors, forbidden printers, and forbidden books, was at length produced, alterations in which have been made as occasion required. To this grand preventive of the promulgation of knowledge, the present Pope refers with approbation in his letter to the Clergy. This Catalogue prohibits the writings, not only of Protestants generally, but also of

many in communion with the Church of Rome, whose books have been thought unfavourable to its power and practices. But ah! worse than all, it prohibits this holy record! It forbids the perusal of the scriptures in modern languages, without the sanction of the clerical authorities! Yes blessed volume! treasury of heavenly knowledge, guide of my feet, consolation of my spirit, mortal men have doomed thee to darkness! "They have taken away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered."

Again: *Popery tyrannizes over its votaries in demanding of them an exposure of their secret thoughts and actions.*

I refer to what is called Auricular Confession, —the recital which every Catholic, male or female, is compelled to make to a priest, of all the sins of which he has been guilty since the last opportunity of the kind, in thought, in word, or in action. When this is done the priest has power to absolve him;* and of the advantages of

* "This church has uniformly taught, that *Confession* and "the priest's *Absolution*, where they may be had, are *required* "for the pardon of the penitent sinner, as well as *contrition*, "and a *firm purpose of amendment*."—*End of Relig. Controv.* p. 299.

this sacrament, as it is termed, he is enjoined to avail himself at least once a year. Frequent confession is encouraged, but annual confession is required; and it cannot be desirable to any sincere catholic to make the intervals between such exercises long, as he is taught to believe that "the absolution hereupon pronounced is not conditional or declarative only, but absolute and judicial." Never was such an engine devised by other tyrants to rivet chains upon the spirit, to entrap the wary, and to enslave the strong. The Catholic Sovereign, cannot confer with his Secretary of State on any project which may be deemed heretical, or which is designed to oppose the exorbitant pretensions of Rome, without exposing himself afterwards to an insidious cross examination, by an emissary of the Popedom. The Catholic inquirer after truth if present among us this evening, must confess the occurrence to his spiritual adviser, and submit to such verbal reproof and corporeal chastisement as bigotry might deem it expedient to inflict. The Catholic son must reveal the most private discourse with his father, if any part of it appears to him to be criminal in the eye of the church; and the Catholic wife must, in many instances, be obliged to make such communications, as necessarily

imply the guilt of her husband. Oh what a powerful instrument of despotism is this ! Once in the net, escape is almost impossible. Spies on your actions constitute your household ; and your own lips are suborned to betray you. The thoughts of your heart are demanded ; you must lay bare your bosom, or by concealment incur the guilt of sacrilege. Thus the spiritual tyrant of a little hamlet is put into possession of the secrets of every family, and the imaginations of every heart ; and can turn his knowledge to whatever account his ambition or his cupidity, his passions or his appetites, may dictate. Thus a crafty dependent of the Man of Rome may pry into the mysteries of every cabinet, by putting such questions to a superstitious sovereign, or privy counsellor, as an adept in the system can ask, and none but an adept would be able to evade.*

* “ I shall now give a specimen of the manner in which a penitent is taught to catechise himself, with a view to his being catechised by the priest, when he goes to confess. “ The Garden of the Soul ” furnishes “ an examination of conscience upon the ten commandments.” I shall give only a few extracts as a sample. Some of the questions are not fit to meet the eye of a modest man or woman, and yet they have a conspicuous place in this favourite book of popish devotion. On the first commandment. “ Have you been guilty of heresy, or

The tyranny of Popery further appears in its assumption of authority to controul and to punish its votaries of every rank and station in society.

“ disbelief of any article of faith, or of voluntary doubting of
“ any article of faith? How often? And for how long a time?
“ Or have you rashly exposed yourself to the danger of infi-
“ delity, by reading bad books, or keeping wicked company?
“ How often? Have you by word or deed denied your religion,
“ or gone to the churches or meetings of heretics, so as to join
“ with them any way in their worship? Or to give scandal?
“ How often?” .. “ Have you neglected to hear mass upon
“ Sundays and holy-days of obligation? Or have you heard it
“ with wilful distraction? Or not taken care that your chil-
“ dren or servants should hear it? How often? Have you
“ spent those days in idleness or sin? Or been the occasion of
“ others spending them so? How often? Have you done any
“ servile work without necessity on those days? Or set others
“ on doing so? How often? Have you broke the days of
“ abstinence commanded by the church? or eaten more than
“ one meal on fasting days? or been accessary to others so
“ doing? How often? Have you neglected to confess your
“ sins once a year? or to receive the blessed sacrament at
“ Easter? Have you made a sacrilegious confession or com-
“ munion, by concealing some mortal sin in confession, or
“ what you doubted might be mortal? Or for want of a
“ hearty sorrow for your sins and a firm purpose of amend-
“ ment? Or by being grossly negligent in the examination of
“ your conscience? How often? Have you received any
“ other sacrament, for example, confirmation or matrimony in
“ mortal sin? Have you neglected to perform the penance en-
“ joined in confession? Or said it with wilful distraction?
“ How often? Have you presumed to receive the blessed sa-

This arises as naturally from Auricular Confession, as Auricular Confession arises from the right of the clergy to determine what actions

“crament after having broken fast? Have you after falling into mortal sin, neglected for a long time to return to God by repentance? And for how long a time?” I have here given the whole of what is to be inquired into relating to the divine command, “Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” and the reader will see that there is scarcely a word that relates to the spirit and meaning of the divine precept. The holy day of spiritual rest is quite forgotten; the fasts and feasts of the Church are put in its place; and the sinner professing penitence is taught to purge his conscience only with regard to the latter.”

Mr. Gavin in his “*Master Key*” gives a most minute illustration of this subject, with several examples of the mischievous effect of Auricular Confession, in debauching the minds of young persons. “To the discovery of mortal sins,” says he, “the Father Confessor doth very much help the penitent; for he sometimes out of pure zeal, but most commonly out of curiosity, asks them many questions; to know whether they remember all their sins or not? By these and the like questions the Confessors do more harm than good, especially to the ignorant people and young women. And when they come to that tribunal, with a sincere, ignorant heart, to receive advice and instruction, they go home with light knowledge and an idea of sins unknown to them before.” If the tendency of Auricular Confession were to be fully illustrated, or historical documents relating to its abuses adduced, this sheet would be rendered unfit for family inspection. The author only adds, therefore, that the contents of this Note are selected from much similar matter in *The Protestant*, vol. ii. p. 319, 331.

are sinful, and what doctrines are true. The priest to whom the penitent confesses is the sole judge of his demerit; to him alone therefore it belongs to decide what quantity of guilt is incurred, and what penalty, wisdom and holiness require. It is usual to attach some penance to the grant of absolution; but the nature and degree of it vary according to the criminality imputed, or the rigour which it is deemed expedient to exercise. It may be to repeat the seven penitential psalms; it may be to receive a number of stripes, to wear a hair shirt, or to perform a pilgrimage; or it may be to pay for a number of masses.

When Princes have dared to oppose the will of the sovereign Pontiff, punishments have been inflicted on them still more terrific; and efficacious measures have been taken to reduce them to obedience. In some cases, the dominions of the rebellious potentate have been laid under an Interdict; and his subjects have been excited to discontent by the inconvenience they experienced through his crime, when public worship has been suspended, the sacraments refused, and the dead buried without the usual solemnities. If the Interdict has failed to humble the refractory monarch, or if it was not deemed expedient to em-

ploy its agency, sentence of excommunication has been issued against him. In not less than sixty instances; according to historic testimony, has this dreaded punishment been inflicted by offended Popes on sovereign princes. Then what true son of the Church could reconcile it with his conscience to obey an excommunicated king? The ties of allegiance were loosed; the authority of the ruler was destroyed. In not a few instances, personal insults have been added to public degradation. Thus Henry IV. the Emperor of Germany, was kept three days in the open air, with his feet bare and his head uncovered, waiting for an audience from Pope Gregory VII.; who at the expiration of that period, with much condescension received his submissions, and removed the excommunication under which he laboured; but prohibited him from exercising any function of royalty.* Thus Frederic I. who had announced his determination to maintain the dignity of the empire, and lessen the power of the Pontiff, was compelled, after exhibiting unavailing tokens of reluctance, to perform the office of equerry to Pope Adrian IV. by holding his stirrup while he mounted his

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Cent. xi. Part 2.

horse.* Thus Henry II. of England was constrained to suffer his naked back to be scourged by monks, at the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket, to atone for his alleged acquiescence in the death of that ambitious Prelate.† And thus John, after having been excommunicated and assailed by papal bulls, one of which absolved his subjects from their oaths of allegiance, another of which called on christian princes to assist in his overthrow, was ultimately obliged to resign his kingdom to Pope Innocent III., whose Legate trampled under his feet the money presented by the humiliated sovereign, and retained the crown and sceptre five whole days, before he deigned to restore them.‡

Acting on the principle of Gregory VII. that “Bishops are superior to Kings, and made to judge them,” the Romish Clergy, while they exercised authority over temporal princes, contrived to emancipate themselves from civil jurisdiction. To their spiritual courts they summoned persons of every rank, to answer before them, in what were called ecclesiastical causes ; but they maintained that as spiritual

* Mosheim, Cent. xii. Part 2. † Mosheim, Cent. xii. Part 2.

‡ Mosheim, Cent. xiii., Part 2.

persons they were exempted from secular controul ; and would by no means admit the right of a temporal judge to cite them to his tribunal, whatever were the crimes with which they were chargeable. As, however, the inferior clergy were rendered independent of civil authority only through the patronage of their superiors in the Church, these immunities were obtained at the price of absolute allegiance to the upper ranks of the hierarchy. Such superintendence was therefore exercised over them as effectually precluded any material departure from the doctrine or policy of Rome. All mankind were subject to the Bishops ; all the Bishops were subject to the Pope. And because the parochial clergy were not always sufficiently alive to the interests of their Head, various orders of Monks and Friars were instituted, who derived their authority immediately from the Pontiff, who were responsible to him alone, and who acted as spies for him over Bishops, Archbishops, and Primates. The system was thus brought to such perfection, and its various parts so firmly fitted together, that in those places where its operations are uncontrolled by heretical influence, the laity are dependents on the clergy, and the clergy are dependents on the Pontiff.

How totally this system differs from any thing exemplified or encouraged in the prohibited book, it is not necessary to say. Jesus, our master, himself meek and lowly of heart, took every opportunity to discountenance the first symptoms of ambition among his disciples, and teach that though the rulers of the Gentiles exercised authority, it was not to be so among them. The Apostles after his Ascension appealed boldly to their converts, whether they were not "gentle" among them, "as a nurse cherisheth her children;" and taught the Elders of the infant Churches not to consider themselves "lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." But here we see a combination of skilful artifices to exalt the clergy and to depress the laity. Here we see a system, which manifested its spirit in well chosen words, when the Council of Troyes decreed that "the powers of the world shall not dare to seat themselves in the presence of the Bishops, unless desired;" and which has shewn it as plainly in subsequent ages, by obtaining for its patrons, the complete controul of the bodies and the souls, the purses and the exertions, of all its deluded votaries. How expressive was the prediction: "I know that after my departing, shall

grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock !”

But the tyranny of the Popish system has been displayed, not only in its operations on its own adherents, but also in the conduct it has led them to adopt towards those who did not acknowledge its authority.

When Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to evangelize the followers of Jewish Rabbies, and the worshippers of heathen deities, the only means he suggested, as suitable to the work, was the promulgation of Gospel truth. There were members of the Sanhedrim favourable to his cause, but nothing was said about political influence. Miraculous powers were communicated to his ministers, but they were not authorized to call fire from heaven to consume an opponent, or to inflict disease on a disobedient hearer. His kingdom was not of this world ;—that was the reason why he did not suffer his servants to fight to prevent his being delivered to the Jews ;—that also was the reason why the influence of truth, confirmed by signs of divine approbation, and rendered effectual by the influences of his Almighty Spirit, was the only agency by which his interests were to be established among the Gen-

tiles. He was to be exhibited as expiring on the cross in order to draw men to him ; his dying love was the motive by which they were to be constrained to exert themselves in his service ; and if any appeal was made to fear, it must be by enforcing the terrors of the Lord—not the terrors of the Magistrate.

But the Romish Church, despotic and precipitate from its birth, thinking little of the nature of truth, and the constitution of the human mind, but determined at all events to accomplish its purposes and suppress its opponents, has ever been ready to call for the succour of temporal princes. It has been accustomed to argue that truth being valuable, it was benevolent to enforce it ; and religion being adapted to promote the good of society, it was commendable in the civil governor to employ his authority to restrain and to punish the abettors of error. The allegiance of the ruler to God, and his care for his people, equally required according to its opinion, that he should employ the sword entrusted to him, to avenge the honour of the Deity who was insulted by idolatrous worship ; and to put down every pernicious practice, and every heretical doctrine, whose tendency must be injurious to man.

This principle, once admitted, was found to

apply to the worshipper of Jupiter whose oxen were sacrificed according to the ancient superstition in the pagan temple ;—to the unbelieving Jew who justified the decision of Caiaphas, and misrepresented the adorable Redeemer ;—to the misguided Mahometan who substituted for the sanctifying doctrine of Christ, a system which was adapted to stimulate the passions, and to gratify the perverse inclinations of the heart ;—and to the stubborn heretic, the most dangerous enemy of all, because he assumed the garb of a friend, who debased christianity by incorporating with it his own corrupt imaginations, or stripped it of its glories, by denying some of its principal truths. And if there be any other thing contrary to sound doctrine, it must also rank with these offences, and be punished according to its demerit ; for every possible error is injurious in its tendency, being adapted in some degree, to dishonour God, and injure society.

The Romish Clergy then having as they pretend, an infallible, living, speaking judge in all matters of controversy, able to answer all questions and determine all disputes ; and temporal magistrates having, according to this judge, a right to punish erroneous principles and practices ; between the interpreters of truth on the one

hand, and the executioners of their decrees on the other, the Pagan and the Jew, the Mahomedan and the Heretic, have been in a melancholy condition.

But in every age the chief enmity has been excited, and the heaviest punishments have been endured, by those persons who acknowledged Jesus Christ as their Lord, but would not acknowledge the Pope as his Vicar. It would be easy to enter into details on this subject, which would harrow up your feelings ; for horrid deeds have been perpetrated under the mask of religion, by the members of this corrupt community, with which no other acts of cruelty or injustice recorded by historians could bear comparison. But the exigency of the case does not demand the recital ; and I willingly forbear to make it. My object is not to stimulate your passions, but to inform your judgment ; not to provoke indignation against mistaken men, but to expose the nature of their system. It is proper that you should be informed that from the earliest ages there have been persons, whom the degenerate but dominant church has denominated *heretics* ; and that though we know scarcely any thing of more large classes of them than adversaries have recorded ; and though these prejudiced historians

have attributed to them the grossest errors, and charged them with the vilest crimes ; yet there is reason to believe that many of them were faithful witnesses for God. Faithful to their principles they must have been, for the constancy of a large proportion of them has been put to the severest test. And of many who suffered as heretics in those ages concerning which our information is the fullest, we perceive that their heresies were much like our own. Thousands, —tens of thousands,—millions of these, for their attachment to what they thought truth, or for their opposition to what they considered pernicious error ; have endured the most distressing indignities in their own persons ; the most heart-rending violations of parental, paternal, and conjugal feelings ; or, the ultimatum of cruelty,—the application of violence to the body sufficient to destroy its union with the soul, with such concomitant circumstances as to occasion exquisite corporeal pain, and mental agitation in the dying moments. I shall not describe the dungeons into which these estimable sufferers were cast, or the racks on which they were tortured,—the mountains and forests in which they wandered, or the privations and hardships they endured ; the insults they expe-

rienced while permitted to live, or the ingenious variety of methods in which they were barbarously murdered. The day is coming when every one of them will stand at the tribunal of Christ: his story will then be developed; his adversaries will be heard; and a right judgment will be awarded.

A disposition to persecute is not peculiar to the professors of any creed, or the members of any community. I regret to say that different sects, both in ancient and modern times, have been guilty of shedding human blood in the name of the gentle and benign Redeemer; but in this species of wickedness, the Church of Rome has long had an unrivalled pre-eminence. Other Churches have persecuted casually; she constantly:—others under the influence of transient feeling; she systematically, and from principle. Not content with the common zeal of her public functionaries, she has consecrated men to this peculiar service. She has instituted offices, and established communities for this express purpose; she has encouraged whole troops of ecclesiastics to devote themselves to the work, and she has allowed men the character of priests, the revenues of princes, and the power of despots, on condi-

tion that they would make persecution the sole business of their lives.

Among the various devices which have been employed by the Romish Clergy, in various ages, to annihilate their opponents, and reduce all Christendom to a blind subserviency, it is proper to distinguish the establishment of those imperious courts—those dens of murderers—which are known in many Popish countries by the title of “The Holy Inquisition.” It is doubtful, indeed, whether those out of the Romish Church, or those in it, have suffered most from this organized conspiracy against conscience and evangelical truth; but it seems most naturally to belong to this part of our subject, because its original design was the extirpation of heresy. In the thirteenth century this expedient was devised, and in the ages immediately succeeding, several of these infernal offices were erected. Do you ask of what nature that tribunal can be which justifies so strong an epithet? I reply a tribunal over which three ecclesiastics preside, having the cognizance of all heresy, infidelity, blasphemy, perjury, sorcery, poisoning, bigamy, usury, and every other species of offence, which can be construed into a crime against religion;—a tribunal

which immures in a secret dungeon its wretched victim, not allowing him the slightest communication with relative or friend, medical attendant or legal adviser;—a tribunal which employs hundreds of spies, to search for culprits, and receives accusations against any man from a voluntary informer, however interested, or however base;—a tribunal which gives the astonished prisoner no intimation of the crime with which he is charged, or the person through whose testimony he is arrested, but requires him, guilty or innocent, to guess the sin and indict himself;—a tribunal into the cheerless caverns of which many enter, but few return.

In the stillness of midnight, when the family is tranquilly reposing, a loud knocking is heard at the door!—"Who is there?"—"The Holy Inquisition!"—A carriage is perceived, in which some of the familiars of the court are seated!—The tremulous voice within now asks "Who is wanted?"—The individual is named.—It may be the father, or the son; it may be the wife or the daughter; but expostulation or delay, would be both unavailing and dangerous. The master of the house may be wanted for his riches, the object of his tenderest affections may be wanted for her beauty; but not a word must be spoken;

not a minute must be wasted!—An immediate surrender takes place! The carriage drives away with its helpless captive, and the bereaved family dare not follow or even lament aloud; but mourn in silence and despair. And when an acquaintance, missing the individual from his accustomed seat at table, asks what has become of him, a significant shake of the head is the only answer. Years roll away, but no inquiry must be made! And if after the lapse of time, and the endurance of suffering, he is permitted to return; his lips are sealed—he is sworn to secrecy,—all is mystery and horror!

But there is one to whom the darkness and the light are both alike. His eye traces the course, penetrates the thick stone wall, and surveys the gloomy cell. Every sigh enters his ear, and is recorded in his journal. And there is nothing secret that shall not be revealed. Many a tragedy is preserved in the book of divine remembrance, which shall be rehearsed before assembled worlds. The oppressed shall have liberty to speak as audibly as the oppressor. The veil of hypocrisy shall be torn aside. Persons and events shall appear in their own true colours. Then will the history of the Inquisition afford to the whole intelligent creation, the most complete

display of the amazing wickedness of man, and the yet more amazing long suffering of his Creator.*

Ecclesiastical History testifies that rivers of blood have been shed under the influence of Popish principles in every country in which they have prevailed. Nor is there any species of brutality which it seems possible that human beings should exercise towards each other, of which the professed vindicators of religious purity in the Romish Church have not furnished a precedent. I think it is fair to impute to the barbarism of past times many of the deeds of cruelty which historians have recorded, as perpetrated by Papists on the defenceless Protestants in Piedmont, in the Netherlands, in France, in Ireland, and in Britain itself. Surely in the more civilized state of society in which we live, no hostility, religious or political, could so far transform men into demons as to induce our countrymen to inflict such savage tortures on any

* In Spain alone it appears that the number of victims incarcerated in the Inquisition, between the years 1480 and 1808, a period of 328 years, was not less than 341,422!—32,382 of whom were burnt alive; 17,690 burnt in effigy, and 291,450 punished by imprisonment, with confiscation of property.—See *Evan. Mag.* 1820.

human being, or any living animal, as are described in many martyrologies! But still I must avow a painful belief that it is in the very nature of Popery to persecute, and even to persecute to death. Its claims are too arrogant to make toleration consistent with its creed; its hostility to private judgment is too deadly to suffer it to respect religious scruples. I give credit indeed to respectable individuals of the Romish persuasion in this country, when they say they have no wish to repress by force the religion of their neighbours. Receiving themselves the advantages arising from a tolerant spirit, they so far apprehend its excellence, as to acknowledge that in the present state of society it is expedient. As the Jewish Rabbi who asked, "who is my neighbour," could not but perceive that it was good in the Samaritan to assist the suffering Hebrew, and thus was taught the propriety of general benevolence; so they have learnt in their own experience the value of toleration, and probably think that were circumstances reversed they would "Go and do likewise." And it is likely that humanity has so much influence over their minds, as to lead them to detest the very thought of treating their neighbours, as Protestants were treated by Papists, in some former

periods of British history. But I do greatly fear, that if Popery were to regain that ascendancy in this nation which it formerly had, it would appear to be, in one respect, what its friends assure us that it is,—“every where and always the same.” I do fear that in that case, the doctrine of implicit faith would oblige these respectable individuals, or their successors, to receive sentiments from Rome, which it is not the interest of Rome at present to press on their attention. And this idea, which contributes nothing to my happiness, but which it would give me pleasure to see cause to abandon, is not at all weakened by my acquaintance with what the Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District has written on the subject.

You will, perhaps, be surprised to hear that this high authority among British Catholics actually denies that the Church of Rome has ever persecuted at all ! Listen however to his language : “ I begin with expressly denying the “ Bishop of London’s Charge ; namely *that the “ Catholic Church maintains a claim of punish- “ ing heretics with penalties, imprisonment, tor- “ tures, and death* ; and I assert on the contrary, “ that she disclaims the power of so doing.” “ Long before their time,” he adds, in reference

to St. Ambrose and St. Martin, who had refused to hold communion with two Spanish Bishops, because they had interfered in the capital punishment of certain Priscillian heretics—" long before their time Tertullian had taught that *it does not belong to religion to force religion* ; and a considerable time after, when St. Augustine and his companions, the envoys of Pope Gregory the Great, had converted our King Ethelbert, to the christian faith, they particularly instructed him not to use forcible means for the purpose of inducing any of his subjects to follow his example. But what need of more authorities on this head, since our canon law, as it stood in ancient times, and as it still stands, renders all those who have actually concurred to the death or mutilation of any human being, whether Catholic or heretic, Jew, or pagan, even in a just war, or by exercising the art of surgery, or by judicial proceedings, irregular ; that is to say such persons cannot be promoted to Holy Orders, or exercise those orders, if they have actually received them. Nay, when an ecclesiastical judge or tribunal has, after due examination, pronounced that any person accused of obstinate heresy is actually guilty of it, he is required by the

“ Church expressly to declare in her name, that
“ her power extends no further than such deci-
“ sion ; and in case the obstinate heretic is liable,
“ by the laws of the state, to death or mutila-
“ tion, the Judge is required to pray for his par-
“ don. Even the Council of Constance, in con-
“ demning John Huss, of heresy, declared that
“ its power extended to nothing further.”*

You now perceive the pretext for denying, what you might previously have supposed no man would have ventured to dispute. *The Church*, in the language of a Catholic, sometimes means the Clergy alone, and sometimes the Clergy and Laity united. When it is said, “ we know that
“ salvation belongs to the Church alone, and that
“ no one can partake of Christ, nor can be saved
“ out of the Catholic Church and Faith,”—the Clergy and Laity are both included in the term. But when it is said that the Church disclaims the power of persecuting, by the Church is only meant the Clergy. This appears more fully in the paragraph with which the Reverend Apologist for Rome follows up the language I have already cited. “ But,” he proceeds to say, “ whereas many heresies are subversive of the
“ established governments, of the public peace,

* End of Religious Controversy, p. 353.

“ and of natural morality, it does not belong to the
“ Church to *prevent* Princes and States from ex-
“ ercising their just authority in repressing and
“ punishing them, when this is judged to be
“ actually the case ; nor would any clergyman
“ incur irregularity by exhorting Princes and
“ Magistrates to provide for those important ob-
“ jects, and the safety of the Church itself, by
“ repressing its disturbers ; provided he did not
“ concur to the death or mutilation of any parti-
“ cular disturber. Thus it appears that though
“ there have been persecuting laws in many Ca-
“ tholic States, the Church itself, so far from
“ *claiming*, actually *disclaims* the power of per-
“ secuting.”*

So then the Church of Rome does not persecute ! That is to say, the fatal blow is struck by the Catholic Magistrate,—not by the Catholic Minister. The Priest does not concur ! That is to say, he exhorts the ruler to punish all heretics, but asks mercy for each ; he encourages him to repress the Church’s disturbers, but does not concur in the death of any particular disturber. The distinction may be very satisfactory to a Romish casuist, but with my Protestant

* Ut supra.

notions, it would give me, I apprehend, but little consolation at the stake, to know that I was burnt not as an individual, but as one of a class, and that the Priest who exhorted the Prince to kill all of the kind, made it a rule not to take an active part in the murder of any.

When an advocate of genius undertakes a desperate cause, determined to say all that can be said in its favour, it would be politic for him to submit his plea to the revision of some sober-minded friend, lest it should appear that in his zeal to say every thing, he had said too much. Dr. Milner's Apology for Romish tyranny affords an exemplification of this remark. Had some brother prelate of a temperament less ardent than his own, perused his manuscript before it was committed to the press, he would probably have advised the omission of those closing paragraphs, in which the *Principles* of the Romish Church are pleaded as an apology for its practices. Charging Protestants with being greater persecutors than the members of his own Church, he adduces two circumstances as aggravations of their guilt, which really deserve our serious attention. "In the first place," he says, "whenever Catholic States and Princes "have persecuted Protestants it was always in

“favour of an *ancient religion*, which had been
“established in their country perhaps a thousand
“or fifteen hundred years, and had during that
“time preserved its peace, order, and morality,
“while they clearly saw, that an attempt to
“alter this religion, would unavoidably produce
“incalculable disorders and sanguinary contests.
“On the other hand Protestants every where
“persecuted in behalf of some *new system* in
“opposition to the established laws of the Church,
“and of their respective states.”*

Here you have a plea for Catholic persecutors drawn from the lofty claims of that Church to which they belong ; but if you proceed one step further, you will find another plea drawn from its tenets ! “ In the second place, if Catholic States
“and Princes have enforced submission to their
“Church by persecution, they were fully per-
“suaded that *there is a divine authority in this*
“*Church to decide in all controversies of reli-*
“*gion*, and that those christians who refuse to
“hear her voice when she pronounces upon
“them, are obstinate heretics. But on what
“ground can Protestants persecute christians of
“any description whatsoever ? Their grand
“rule and fundamental charter is, that the Scrip-

* Ut supra. p. 368.

“ tures were given by God for every man to interpret them, as he judges best.”* Now if this language have any meaning at all, it must mean this: *When Protestants have persecuted, they have acted in opposition to their principles ; but when Papists have persecuted they have acted in conformity with their system !* If Protestants have persecuted, it seems then it has been the fault of the men ; if Papists have persecuted, it has been the legitimate consequence of their creed ! Protestants acknowledging the right of private judgment, their sentiments do not lead them to injure others, though through habit, or prejudice, or thoughtlessness they may have done so ; but Papists denying this right, when they pursue the same course do but draw a correct inference from their tenets ! “ They are fully persuaded that there is a divine authority in this Church to decide in all controversies of religion, and that those christians who refuse to hear her voice, when she pronounces upon them, are obstinate heretics.” The acts of Romish persecutors may then be traced, according to Dr. Milner’s own shewing, to their belief of that rule which he has laboured with the ut-

* Ut supra. p. 369.

most assiduity to establish, and a reliance on which he rightly considers the fundamental and unalterable principle of the whole Catholic system.

But we are authorized to affirm that the disposition to appeal to force for the repression of heretical men in their heretical practices, still exists in the Romish Church, by a higher authority than even the eminent advocate of the English Catholics whose words I have quoted. The present Pope in his letter to his Clergy, evinces the unaltered spirit of the system. He had exclaimed in the course of his previous lamentations, " Let God arise and check, restrain, and annihilate this excessive licentiousness of speaking, writing, and publishing abroad ;" but, when in discanting on the operations of the Bible Society, his anxieties grew stronger, he thought it desirable to look around him for other helpers. " Do ye therefore, venerable brethren," he adds, " place with Augustine, the words of Christ and of the Apostle Paul before your eyes, and meditate frequently upon them, that you may teach the people committed to you, how venerable the authority of the Church is, which has been settled immediately by God himself.

“ Be not disheartened. We acknowledge with
 “ the same Augustine, that these waters of the
 “ deluge, to wit, the multiplicity of different doc-
 “ trines, press upon us at every side. We are
 “ not within the deluge, but we are encom-
 “ passed by it; the waters approach us but do
 “ not overwhelm us; they come near to us, but
 “ they do not engulf us.

“ Again, therefore, we exhort you that your
 “ courage fail not. *The power of temporal*
 “ *princes will, we trust in the Lord, come to your*
 “ *assistance, whose interest, as reason and ex-*
 “ *perience show, is concerned when the authority*
 “ *of the Church is questioned* ;* for it never can
 “ happen that the things which are Cæsar’s,
 “ would be given to Cæsar, if the things that
 “ are God’s be not given to God.†

For what can the Pontiff want the aid of tem-
 poral princes? Not to adduce new arguments;
 not to utter persuasive speeches; but to employ
 authority. By secular force he wishes to restrain

* “ Aderit vobis, certe in Domino confidimus, Sæcularium Prin-
 cipum potestas, quorum causa, teste non solum ratione, sed
 etiam experientia, agitur, cum causa agitur Auctoritatis Ec-
 clesiæ.”

† The Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XII. p. 18.

our Biblical fervour ; he therefore gives this plain intimation to kings and statesmen that nothing would be more acceptable to him, than that they should unite to suppress the Bible Society, and to forbid all men to question “ the authority of the Church.”

If it be possible then that Popery should be divested of its dangerous qualities, it has not yet attained that state of perfection. If the Church of Rome has abandoned its persecuting propensities, the Pope is not in the secret: others may applaud toleration, but he hopes to engage on behalf of the Church “ **THE POWER OF TEMPORAL PRINCES.**”

Be thankful then, christian brethren, that the government of this favoured country is not under the influence of him who wears the triple crown. Prize the liberty which God in his providence has graciously allotted you, and pray for its continuance. And as you possess the power as well as the right to examine the doctrine of Christ for yourselves, make use of your advantages to know his will ; submit to his mandates, and be guided by his word. Avoid all approaches to that intolerant spirit which has ever distinguished the apostate Church ; deal gently with Papists, and show kindness

to all men. . . And finally evince by your conduct as well as your words, your gratitude to God, for that peculiar kindness, which has cast your lot, where the Bible is openly read, and where Conscience is permitted to interpret, where Inquisitors are powerless, and where Liberty is Law.

LECTURE IV.

ON ITS RISE.



“ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work : only he who now letteth with let, until he be taken out of the way.”—2 *Thess.* ii. 6, 7.



YOUR recent meditations on the principles, the worship, and the tyranny, of that system which is maintained by the Romish Church, have I trust, tended to deepen your persuasion of its unscriptural character. But unless you are already acquainted with the history of its origin, you can scarcely have failed to ask with some degree of astonishment, how it was that a scene of things so repugnant to the genius of the New Testament, should have arisen among the professed disciples of Jesus Christ, and superseded his religion. A system, you have been ready to say, which restricts the perusal of those scriptures

which Christ commanded us to search, and which were written by inspired men for our admonition ;—a system which clothes with the loftiest attributes of God, a mortal man whose name and office are equally unknown to the sacred volume, and authorizes him to hurl his thunders at the princes of the earth, to revoke the most solemn oaths, to remit the penalties of sin, and to dispense with the laws of the Creator ;—a system which sanctions the worship of saints and angels, and teaches its votaries to prostrate themselves before a wooden image, or a rusty nail ;—a system which requires men to believe, on pain of everlasting misery, dogmas, of the truth of which no evidence has been adduced, and some of which are contradicted by the plainest testimony of their senses ; a system which teaches men to pursue with unrelenting animosity all who submit not to its sway, till their bones blackened in the flames which have consumed their flesh are ground to powder, and even then, in the name of all that is adorable, imprecates curses on their souls :—how could such a system ever usurp the name of Christianity ?—how could it ever find admission among the followers of Jesus ?

It is important that the inquiry should be answered. We should ascertain, if possible, the

first steps which led to this great apostacy, that we may avoid all approaches to its errors ; and that we may learn those salutary truths, for the sake of elucidating which, its existence was permitted.

Now it appears to me that the secret spring of all the evil, was a worldly spirit, which gained ascendancy in the Christian Church, and especially took possession of the hearts of christian ministers.

It is not to any specific opinion that we can trace the mischief ; it is not to any particular erroneous practice ; it is not to the influence of any individual man ; it is not to the operations of any peculiar event ; but the source from which all the waters of this deluge have proceeded, was a *worldly spirit*, which secularized the Church in general, and especially impelled the ministers of Christ, to seek above all things their own aggrandizement. This was the mystery of the iniquity—the secret cause of the subsequent abominations. It did already work in the days of the Apostles, but was prevented from operating in all its vigour, till it ceased to be repressed by a preponderating earthly government, which at first hindered the full developement of its malignant tendencies.

At the commencement of the apostacy, the external form of Christianity continued ; but the spirit fled, and soon the carcase putrified, and poisoned all the atmosphere. The doctrines and the practices taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles were at first retained ; but the tempers they implied were absent ; and then the doctrines and the practices were mutilated, to render them agreeable to the dispositions of the professed believers. Office in the Christian Church was obtained by men of a very different spirit from its first ministers ; and then by degrees they innovated and altered, omitted and added, till at length scarce a vestige remained of the simplicity, the purity, and the transforming efficacy of the gospel.

That you may perceive more clearly the manner in which christianity was corrupted through the operation of a worldly spirit, it is necessary that you should take a view of its original state. I must, therefore, beg you to endeavour to form a scriptural idea of a primitive Christian, a primitive Church, and a primitive Bishop.

A primitive Christian was a man who embraced the religion of Jesus Christ because he believed it to be true, and felt that it was adapted to his exigencies. It revealed a Saviour who could

rescue him from guilt, depravity and ruin. He felt his need of pardon ; and it presented an atoning sacrifice. He felt his need of instruction ; and it revealed the way to happiness, and gave an unerring rule of conduct. He felt his need of holiness ; and he found motives to stimulate him to duty in gospel doctrines, and assistance to perform it in the promised aid of the Holy Spirit to every suppliant. Believing the statements of the New Testament to be true, he thought that nothing which earth afforded could bear to be put into competition with the happiness of heaven. His affections were set on things above ; there was his treasure ; there consequently was his heart. Knowing that in heaven he had a better and an enduring substance, he could take joyfully the spoiling of his goods. Animated by love to Christ, he was willing to suffer for his sake. He loved his home, his wife, his children, but if called to part with these or renounce the Saviour, he preferred the Saviour to them all. Conscious that all that he possessed he owed to the distinguishing grace of God, he walked humbly before him. It was his constant aim to imitate Jesus Christ, obey his commands, and live to his glory. Meekness and patience, humility and benevolence, were the predominant

features of his social character. He lived above the world, though in it; looking not so much on things seen and temporal, as on things unseen and eternal; walking by faith, rather than by sight. This I think those of you who are conversant with the New Testament will acknowledge to be a fair representation of a primitive Christian; such a man as the religion of Jesus Christ was adapted to form, such a man as when received in a manner satisfactory to its first teachers, it actually produced.

A primitive Church, was a collection of such christians, residing in the same neighbourhood, and united for the promotion of each others spiritual welfare, for the maintenance of divine ordinances, and for the propagation of religious truth. Love was the tie by which they were held together,—a love arising from mutual attachment to the common object of supreme regard, Jesus their Lord, and from their mutual desire to promote his cause. They had no other laws, than the laws of Christ; no other articles of faith, than the New Testament; no other aim than the promotion of religion in themselves and others. No man was received into their communion who did not profess submission and

attachment to their Saviour ; and if any acted in an immoral way, or renounced the authority of the Redeemer, they speedily disowned him. Whatever improprieties any one of their number might commit, this was the only punishment which they inflicted ; they would not admit the guilty person into their company, or treat him as a disciple of their master. They had no connexion with affairs of state ; opposed no form of civil government ; sought no patronage from rulers. All they desired from magistrates was that they would not interfere with them or their worship, but treat them as all other inoffensive persons should be treated. They were simply an association of spiritual men, united for spiritual purposes.

A primitive Bishop, was the teacher of this little society ; the overseer—so the word Bishop signifies—the overseer of this little band. His duty was to instruct, to comfort, and to warn ; in cases of impropriety to reprove ; and in every possible way to exert himself for the promotion of religion in his own flock, and in the neighbourhood around them. His qualifications were sincere attachment to Jesus Christ, an irreproachable life, that prudence which would tend

to preserve harmony among his people, and ability to teach Christianity to others. His emoluments were never large, and in all cases arose from the voluntary efforts of his friends. If the society were poor, and therefore unable to support him, he followed those occupations by which he had gained a livelihood before he was a bishop : but if they could prevent his entangling himself with the affairs of this life, they did so. And as he gave himself wholly in that case to their service, and the work of Jesus Christ their Lord ; employing his time in prayer, in study, and in public or private ministrations ; they furnished what was necessary for the maintenance of himself and his family. But he possessed no authority over them. He could instruct, advise, exhort, reprove, or expel from his communion ; but he had no power to make laws, or inflict penalties ; to exact contributions, or constrain the conduct. In many churches, there were more than one bishop ; but they were all brethren, all labouring in harmony in the common cause, not as being lords over God's heritage, but as being ensamples to the flock.

This appears to have been the state of things, established by the Apostles ; to this state of things the directions in their inspired letters

apply; and it is easy to perceive its correspondence with the declaration of Jesus Christ, when he said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." But our business this evening is not to meditate on its excellencies, or indulge in fruitless wishes that it had continued; but to contemplate the intrusion of a worldly spirit, and the effects which it produced.

It sometimes happened that a man who at the outset of his christian profession accorded entirely with the representation now given of an early convert, declined in love, in zeal, and in spirituality of heart. He retained his place in the church; and attended regularly to the externals of religion, but lost the heavenly feeling by which he was formerly characterized. Such degeneracy was contagious; and instances soon appeared, in which the majority of a church left their first love, and losing by degrees their original temper, became formal, self-complacent, and lukewarm. And individuals were found in some cases to unite themselves with the society, who never had the christian spirit, but who through the influence of connexions, or the hope of temporal advantage, professed to be believers. Such men would acknowledge the truth of christian doctrine, but not exhibit its influence. They

would preserve decorum in their conduct, but the religion of the heart would be wanting. They would attend with regularity to public ordinances, but would observe them with different feelings from those they excited in the minds of the spiritual.

Now, when unhappily a considerable proportion of the church consisted either of false professors of the gospel, or of genuine disciples in a degenerate frame; the choice of officers would naturally be conducted on unscriptural and injurious principles. If a bishop were to be elected, eloquence would in such a state of things be considered a more important qualification than fervent piety, or biblical wisdom; and family ties would have more influence in the choice than personal adaptation. And if through his talents or his connexions, a man were instated in this office, whose heart was either destitute of religious feeling, or but partially under its influence; the consequences would inevitably be disastrous. Under his ministrations, the degeneracy would naturally increase. Spiritual concerns would be neglected. Pomp and shew, worldly splendour, and conformity to the maxims and predilections of the heathen would be introduced. It would be the constant endeavour of such a man, to

enhance his own power; to impress the people with a high sense of his clerical superiority; to appropriate to himself flattering titles; to introduce such ceremonies as might seem to dignify the officiating minister; and by every method which worldly policy could suggest, to aggrandize the Church in order to aggrandize its leader. In such a case it might be said, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work."

An approximation to this state was exhibited by the Church at Corinth, when Paul addressed them in his first Epistle. The spirit of the gospel had evaporated, though attachment to its name was retained; and much worldly mindedness was evinced while they were contending for the pre-eminence of their highly gifted teachers. One cried 'I am for Paul,' and another 'I am for Apollos;' a third declared himself for Cephas, and a fourth for Christ. The Apostle, therefore, condemned them all, and recommended a more excellent way. The principles by which they were actuated were worldly, though religion was the object of their fervour. "Ye are yet carnal," said he, "for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?"

But to such a pitch of arrogance had some at-

attained, who still bore office in the church, before the death of John, that one at least, not only exercised arbitrary authority over his brethren, but actually refused communion with the only surviving Apostle. "I wrote unto the Church," he complains, "but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church. Thus "the mystery of iniquity did already work."

But how this worldly spirit among the people, and this disposition to aggrandize themselves among the ministers of Christ, continued to operate after the death of the Apostles, it belongs to Ecclesiastical History to tell. And though much respecting the state of Christian society in these early ages, is involved in darkness, the following facts are attested by the most credible writers. The ministers of many of the churches established by the Apostles, soon made themselves the leaders, not of one congregation only, but of many. The first churches had generally been planted in large cities; it being natural

for the Apostles to visit those places where the population was great, as we know in point of fact from the New Testament they ordinarily did. After a season when converts became too numerous to meet conveniently as one assembly, they worshipped in distinct places ; but instead of forming a new Church, under its own Bishop, with all the immunities of the original society, the whole number of disciples were reckoned one Church, under the original Bishop, one of his assistants ministering in each congregation. Laudable efforts were also made to evangelize surrounding villages and towns ; but when these endeavours were successful, the new made Christians instead of being formed into independant Churches, were considered portions of the Church in the city, and they and their minister remained under the superintendence of the city Pastor. In process of time it was thought derogatory to the Episcopal name to call those men Bishops, who were Pastors of no more than one congregation, or whose situation was obscure ; and as the city bishops increased in influence, all the Christians of adjacent towns who had from the first looked up to them with deference, gradually submitted to their authority, and received ministers from their appointment. Thus

a new order of Pastors arose, distinct from Bishops, and subordinate to them.

Further, it was frequently desirable that churches of the same province, or the same country, should consult on matters of general concern. In some cases it was also deemed expedient, to submit difficult questions to their decision. When meetings of their delegates were held, it was natural to hold them in the metropolis of the district; a convenient and usually a central place. The bishop of that metropolis was of course made president of the meeting. The president of a meeting has in many cases the execution of its decrees. Some degree of authority remains in the individual after the meeting is separated; and what at first is ceded as a matter of complaisance soon grows into a custom, and thence into a prescriptive right. Thus arose the order of archbishops, superintending the ordinary bishops of their respective provinces.*

* If any reader should ask on what authority the above representations are given, he is referred to Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. i, Part 2, Chap. ii: and Cent. ii, Part 2, Chap. 2;---to Milner's *History of the Church of Christ*, Cent. ii, Chap. 1; to Jones's *History of the Christian Church*, Chap. 3, Sect. 1; to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. 15; and to Campbell's *Lectures on Eccles. Hist.* Lect.

Here you see the worldly spirit producing yet more visible and permanent effects ; assimilating the church of Jesus Christ to the kingdoms of

6, 7, 8, 9, where the subject is amply elucidated. Little doubt need be entertained about statements respecting the early affairs of Christians, which have the concurrence of a learned Lutheran, a Minister of the Church of England, a Baptist, a Sceptic, and a Presbyterian, each of them men of first rate information and talent in their respective classes. And though all of them would not assent to every sentence in the text, the leading particulars have the suffrage of each.--Thus Mr. Milner says (not the living Bishop of that name, to whom we have had so often to refer, but the late Vicar of Hull) "At first indeed, or for some time, church governors were only of two ranks, Presbyters and Deacons ; at least, this appears to have been the case in particular instances ; as at Philippi, and at Ephesus : and the term Bishop, was confounded with that of Presbyter."--Vol. i. p. 161.---Mr. Gibbon says, "The public functions of religion were solely entrusted to the established ministers of the Church, the Bishops, and the Presbyters : two appellations, which in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office, and the same order of persons. The name of Presbyter was expressive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wisdom. The title Bishop denoted their inspection over the faith and manners of the Christians who were committed to their pastoral care." Vol. ii. p. 157.---But the erudite Chancellor of the University of Gottingen, Dr. Mosheim, who has illustrated the whole subject at great length, has concentrated so much pertinent information in one paragraph, that the writer, though unwilling to multiply quotations, cannot refrain from transcribing it. "These councils, of which we find not the smallest trace before the middle of this century" (the second) changed the whole face of the church, and gave it

secular princes ; creating offices for ambition to desire ; and trampling on the rights of private judgment and private feeling. Yet all this was

a new form ; for by them the ancient privileges of the people were considerably diminished, and the power and authority of the Bishops greatly augmented. The humility indeed, and prudence of these pious prelates, prevented their assuming all at once the power with which they were afterwards invested. At their first appearance in these general councils, they acknowledged that they were no more than the delegates of their respective churches, and that they acted in the name, and by the appointment of their people. But they soon changed this humble tone, imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion, and their counsels into laws ; and openly asserted, at length, that Christ had empowered them to prescribe to his people *authoritative rules of faith and manners*. Another effect of these councils was, the gradual abolition of that perfect equality, which reigned among all Bishops in the primitive times. For the order and decency of these assemblies required, that some one of the provincial Bishops met in council, should be invested with a superior degree of power and authority ; and hence the rights of *Metropolitans* derive their origin. In the mean time, the bounds of the Church were enlarged ; the custom of holding councils was followed wherever the sound of the gospel had reached ; and the universal Church had now the appearance of one vast republic, formed by a combination of a great number of little states. This occasioned the creation of a new order of ecclesiastics, who were appointed in different parts of the world, as heads of the Church, and whose office it was to preserve the consistence and union of that immense body, whose members were so widely dispersed throughout the nations. Such was the nature and office of the

not atchieved without opposition. Many struggles took place, and various kinds of influence were exerted. But alas ! the whole scene demonstrates that there was already a considerable departure from the simple, humble, self-denying spirit of Christianity. Eusebius, the bishop of Cæsarea, the great historian of ecclesiastical antiquity, referring to the Christians of the age which immediately preceded his own, thus describes their lamentable state : “ Through too much liberty, they grew negligent and slothful, envying and reproaching one another ; waging as it were, civil wars among themselves, Bishops quarrelling with Bishops, and the people divided into parties. Hypocrisy and deceit were grown to the highest pitch of wickedness. They were become so insensible as not so much as to think of appeasing the divine anger ; but like atheists, they thought the world destitute of any providential government and care, and thus added one crime to another. The Bishops themselves had thrown off all concern about religion ; were perpetually con-

Patriarchs, among whom at length, ambition, being arrived at its most insolent period, formed a new dignity, investing the Bishop of Rome, and his successors, with the title and authority of Prince of the Patriarchs.” - Mosheim, Cent. ii. Part 2. Chap. 2.

“ tending with one another, and did nothing but
 “ quarrel with and threaten, and envy, and hate
 “ one another ; they were full of ambition, and
 “ tyrannically used their power.”* Cyprian,
 afterwards Bishop of Carthage, drew a similar
 picture of the state of the church when the perse-
 cution broke out under Decius in the year 249.
 “ It must be owned and confessed,” says he,
 “ that the outrageous and heavy calamity, which
 hath almost devoured our flock, and continues to
 devour it to this day, hath happened to us because
 of our sins, since we keep not the way of the
 Lord, nor observe his heavenly commands,
 which were designed to lead us to salvation.
 Christ our Lord, fulfilled the will of the Father,
 but we neglect the will of Christ. Our principal
 study is to get money and estates ; we follow
 after pride ; we are at leisure for nothing but
 emulation and quarrelling, and have neglected
 the simplicity of the faith. We have renounced
 this world in words only, and not in deed.
 Every one studies to please himself, and to dis-
 please others.”† We are not to suppose that
 these censures were literally applicable to every

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. in Jones’s Hist. of the Christian Church, Vol. i, p. 285.

† Epist. xi. in Jones’s Hist. Vol. i, p. 284.

Christian of that age ; the constancy with which thousands endured the cruel persecution which ensued, forbids the idea : but taken in conjunction with similar testimonies, and concomitant circumstances, they do compel us to believe that a sad declension from Christian purity prevailed before the close of the third century.

At this period, an event took place which released the mystery of iniquity from restraint, and produced a total alteration in ecclesiastical affairs. Constantine, the Roman Emperor, declared himself a Christian. Before this time, the religion of Jesus had been generally discountenanced in the Imperial Court, and opposed by men in power throughout the provinces. Persecutions had been frequent and severe ; and toleration under the most favourable rulers, seldom complete. But now the governor of the civilized world, either from policy or conviction, and different writers ascribe to him different motives, avowed himself a disciple of the despised Nazarene, encouraged Christian worship, and patronized Christian ministers. In the early part of his reign, he published an edict, allowing both Christians and Pagans the free exercise of their religion. But afterwards, he proceeded much further. He erected splendid temples for Chris-

tian worship, bearing a striking resemblance to Pagan temples, both in their external and internal appearance. He adorned those temples, many of which were built over the tombs of martyrs, and dedicated to their memory, with pictures and images. He caused medals to be dispersed throughout the provinces on which he was represented in a humble and suppliant posture of Christian devotion. He prohibited by law the worship of idols, and assigned to Christian ministers, the honors and authority of the deposed Pagan priests. On the bishops of the predominant sect he lavished his imperial treasure ; and against their heretical opponents he exercised his power, by banishing their leaders, prohibiting their assemblies, and burning their books.

The consequences of these proceedings were such as might be expected. Worldly men coveted and obtained the highest offices in the Christian Church, and regulated its doctrine and its worship by worldly principles. Every possible expedient was adopted to impart to it an air of grandeur. To make Christianity more palatable to pagan neighbours, many of their customs were borrowed, and observed as Christian rites. Judaism having much in it adapted to dazzle the imagination, many Levitical institutions were

incorporated with the simple religion of Jesus. The public prayers degenerated into swelling bombast; the sermons were studded with vain embellishments to attract admiration; festivals and commemorations of the martyrs were multiplied; magnificent vestments were worn by the ministers; costly vessels were used in the service; mitres, tiaras, crosiers, wax tapers, processions and lustrations contributed to the pomp; and loud congratulations on the prosperity of the Church every where abounded, which were scarcely interrupted by the whispers of the few, who said that formerly they had golden priests and wooden cups, but now they had golden cups and wooden priests!

During several successive reigns the affairs of the Church were in a fluctuating state. Some of the Emperors favoured Paganism, others supported Christianity, and of these, some patronized the adherents to the Nicene Creed, and others its opponents. The persecutors were in their turn persecuted, whenever the partialities of the reigning monarch were contrary to those of his predecessor. At length a victory, the effects of which were permanent, was gained by the Trinitarian Bishops under Theodosius. That Emperor who appears to have been sincere in his

attachment to christianity, but whose zeal was indiscreet, distinguished himself by his exertions to annihilate, both the ancient superstitions and the modern heresies. In the year 383 a Council assembled under his auspices at Constantinople, in which the Creed was ratified which had been drawn up by the Council of Nice under Constantine, and all who impugned it were anathematized. Severe edicts were immediately issued against dissenters of every class. They were strictly forbidden to meet or to worship, to preach or to ordain. They were disqualified for honourable or lucrative employments, prohibited from making wills or receiving legacies, and in some cases subjected to banishment or death. Christian blood began again to flow, before the conclusion of the century which witnessed the emancipation of the Redeemer's followers from heathen persecutions. About the year 390, Theodosius also issued an edict abolishing the worship of Pagan idols. The act of sacrificing, was declared to be high treason against the state, expiable only by the death of the guilty. These imperial laws it is said were rigidly executed; the worship of Jupiter and Apollo was effectually suppressed, but the carnal weapons employed could only kill the body of

paganism ; its spirit survived ; and entering the christian temple, exerted there an influence as powerful as it had ever possessed in its original abode.

You may form some idea of the degree in which professed christians, in these times, were affected by the operation of the mystery of iniquity, from the circumstances which attended the election of that Bishop who presided at Rome when Theodosius ascended the throne, and was in the view of the Emperor, a standard of orthodoxy. So severe was the conflict for this spiritual office, between Damasus, the successful candidate, and Ursinus, his rival, that 137 persons were killed in the tumult it excited, and the Prefect of Rome was obliged to seek refuge in its suburbs. Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen writer of that period describing the scene, assigns reasons for the ardour of the struggle. “ I must acknowledge,” he says “ that when I reflect on the pomp
“ attending that dignity, I am not surprised, that
“ those who are fond of parade should quarrel
“ and fight, and strain every nerve to attain this
“ office, since they are sure if they succeed,
“ to be enriched with the presents of the ma-
“ trons, to appear abroad no more on foot, but
“ in stately chariots, and gorgeously attired, to

“ keep sumptuous tables, nay, and to surpass
“ kings themselves in the splendour and magni-
“ ficence of their entertainments. But how happy
“ would they be, if despising the voluptuousness
“ and show of the city, which they plead in ex-
“ cuse for their luxury, they followed the exam-
“ ple of some Bishops in the provinces, who by
“ the temperance and frugality of their diet, the
“ poverty and plainness of their dress, the un-
“ assuming modesty of their looks, approve
“ themselves pure and upright to the eternal
“ God, and all his genuine worshippers.”*

Such indeed was the external splendour attached to that office, that a pagan nobleman of the highest rank said, when conversing with Damasus, on religious subjects, “ Make me but Bishop of Rome and I will turn christian immediately.”†

The Bishop of Rome was indeed, in that age, a person of great and increasing importance. When the seat of empire was removed to Constantinople, his influence was more powerful than that of any other resident in the west. To him therefore appeals were naturally made by con-

* Lib. 27. Cap. 3. in Camp. Lect. Eccles. Hist. Lect. xii.

† Camp. ut sup.

tending parties, in the absence of the Sovereign, and he was by no means slow to avail himself of the advantages, with which locality, custom, and wealth supplied him, for the aggrandizement of himself and his office. His authority was long checked and restrained by the jealousy of the other leading Metropolitans, particularly the Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople; but Rome had in many respects the pre-eminence. At length in the year 588, the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the advice of a general Council assumed the title of *Universal Bishop*. This of course greatly offended the ambitious prelate of Rome, who could acknowledge no superior. He wrote a letter on the subject to the reigning Emperor, in which he called it a "blasphemous name," and used all his efforts to procure its suppression. In a subsequent letter he declared, "Whoever adopts or affects the title of Universal Bishop, has the pride and character of Antichrist, and is in some manner his forerunner in this haughty quality of elevating himself above the rest of his order." While this dispute was pending, Phocas, a centurion in the army, murdered the Emperor and seized his crown. The Bishop of Rome hastened to congratulate him on his accession, and the usurper in return

upheld the interests of the Roman See; and though death removed that individual from office who had reprobated the title, before his own reluctance to use it had been put to the test; his successor, Boniface, readily accepted from the murderer Phocas, the name and authority of Universal Bishop. In the year 606 a decree was issued, by which this title was entailed in perpetuity on the Roman Pontiff, and he was vested with the primacy of all the Bishops of the Empire.*

These were times of general anarchy. Once powerful Rome had decayed and fallen, through the luxury of its citizens, the tyranny of its governors, and the violence of its foes. Europe was inundated with ignorant barbarians, who readily embraced the superstitious species of christianity which prevailed, and humbled themselves before the sacred Pontiff and his coadjutors. The absolute reign of the clergy now commenced. It was not the kingdom of Christ that succeeded to the dominion of ancient Rome, but the kingdom of the Clergy, who exercised an authority almost as complete as ambition could desire, over the ten secular princedoms which sprung out of the ruins. A large tract of Italy

* Camp. Lect. Eccles. Hist. Lect. xvi.

was surrendered to the Pope as his nominal domain ; but in fact he became governor of Europe. He and his agents rendered the sovereigns of Christendom their vassals, imposed taxes on the people, and obtained possession of the most magnificent buildings, and the most fertile lands. The power of that government, which in the Apostolic age controlled the corrupting spirit, being now destroyed, the mystery of iniquity developed its tendency without restraint. The man of sin attained his full maturity, and swayed his malignant sceptre over the deceived and wondering nations.

It is not necessary to pursue this part of the subject further. The subsequent history of the Papal authority, is indeed well deserving of your studious regard ; but all we can allow ourselves to attend to, on the present occasion, is its rise. The brief view now presented to you of its origin relates principally to the ascendancy which the clergy and their leader gradually acquired. It will readily be seen that this naturally implied the main feature of Popery, the insufficiency of the scriptures as a rule. As however it may be wished that a more particular account should be given of the manner in which direct appeal to the scriptures fell into disuse, I will endeavour

to lay before you some of the pretences, under which an aspiring clergy substituted their own decisions for the dictates of the sacred volume, and gradually superseded its perusal.

Men who had been familiar with the Apostles while living, acted in entire conformity with the dictates of scripture and of common sense, when they observed the commands and relied on the doctrines which their inspired teachers had given to them verbally. Paul exhorted the churches he had founded to "hold the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or epistle." The traditions mean simply the things delivered; and his design evidently is that they should obey equally the directions he had given when present, and the instructions communicated in his letters. When controversies arose, it was natural for men who had conversed with Apostles, to mention what they had heard them say on any subject as well as what they had written; and this to the individual who had a perfect recollection of the words, was as satisfactory as though the inspired decision had been conveyed to his mind by the eye instead of the ear. It was an argument to which an opponent who had not possessed the same accidental advantage could not easily reply: he must either submit or question

the accuracy of the narrative. And in the age which immediately succeeded it was equally natural that a disciple should cite on behalf of a custom or a tenet, whatever he had heard from his father, or his grandfather, or his aged friend, as having dropt from the lips of the Apostles, and be inclined to lay stress upon it ; though in proportion to the distance of time which elapsed, and the number of persons through whom it passed, it would become increasingly liable to corruption. A judicious man who had no clandestine purpose to answer, would give little attention to such stories, knowing the accidents to which they had been exposed in their passage ; but a credulous person, with pious intentions, would be likely to be imposed on himself, and might be the means of imposing on others. Such a man Papias appears to have been, who lived at this period, and whose industry is thus described by himself, in language transmitted to us by Eusebius. “ If at any time I met with any one who had conversed with the elders, I made a diligent inquiry after their sayings, what Andrew, or what Peter said, or what Philip or Thomas, or James, or John, or Matthew, or any other of the Lord’s disciples were wont to say ; and what Aristion, and John the Elder, the

disciples of the Lord uttered. For I thought that those things contained in books could not profit me so much, as what I heard from the mouths of men still surviving." Others doubtless followed the same course; and how convenient an acquaintance with this table-talk theology must be to an overbearing or weak-minded teacher, it is not necessary to shew. By appealing to this, he could answer arguments which he knew not how otherwise to meet; or cut short the dispute by an authoritative declaration that his was the old doctrine taught in his younger days; and that every deviation from it was an unhallowed novelty, the offspring of a speculative disposition, a licentious innovation on venerable customs. In proportion as the ministers of Christ grew arrogant and haughty, it is evident that their partiality for this method of expounding scripture, and deciding controversies would increase.

In the third century when many corruptions sprung up, a mode of interpreting the inspired writings obtained repute, which it is necessary to notice as having materially contributed to undermine their authority. Origen, one of the most learned and industrious of the ancient christians, to whom we are indebted for much valuable information respecting the sacred text, was unhap-

pily attached in an immoderate degree to the Platonic system of philosophy. He studied the scriptures with great diligence, and commented on them with much errudition, but appears to have been deficient in that docility which leads a man to "become a fool that he may be wise," and submit all his reasonings to the voice of revelation. He entertained the idea that the literal meaning of scripture would not support the system of divinity maintained by himself and his associates against the attacks of all classes of objectors ; and instead of proceeding to modify his creed that it might correspond with the scripture, he set himself to find such a method of expounding the scripture as might make it correspond with his creed. The Platonists interpreted in an allegorical manner the histories of the Pagan Gods ; and he in conformity with their practice, assigned allegorical interpretations to the Old and New Testaments. He maintained that the source of many errors, lay in adhering to the *carnal* or *external* part of scripture ; and that there was a *spiritual* or hidden meaning, much more excellent than the apparent sense. The outward letter, as he termed it, he neglected and despised ; and published his allegorical commentaries as the true and valuable meaning ; of

course imputing to the sacred penmen whatever his fancy or prejudices dictated. Nothing could better suit the purposes of a worldly disputant who was contending not for truth but for victory. The example was too inviting to be neglected, and this mode of treating the oracles of God became prevalent. His opponents could allegorize as well as he. All who desired to model christianity according to their favourite systems of philosophy, or to display their ingenuity in producing new arguments for well known truths, invented allegorical interpretations, and triumphed in the ease with which they made scripture teach whatever they desired. An appeal to the simple dictate of revelation thus became unfashionable among christian divines, and they went on in this interminable labyrinth, pleasing themselves and others with their futile imaginations, "deceiving and being deceived."*

It had always been the practice in the Roman courts of justice to decide matters of a doubtful nature by the authority of certain lawyers distinguished for ability and experience. If they did not agree in opinion, the point was determined, either by a plurality of voices, or by the

* See Mosheim, Cent. iii. Part 2. Chap. 3.

sentiments of the most illustrious members of the venerable body. In the councils of the Christians this practice was adopted; questions were commonly decided by an appeal to the authority of teachers of great renown; or to the opinions of venerated persons who had been removed from the world. The collection of these opinions into books occupied the labours of many, who called themselves Commentators on Scripture, but were in reality nothing more than compilers of the interpretations of more ancient Doctors.* Thus human fancies and reasonings superseded by degrees the faithful sayings of God. The voice of antiquity was followed with servile and implicit submission, except some advantage to the governors of the church were attainable by innovation. He who was versed in the sentiments of the most famous Christian Rabbies was reputed to be a great theologian. By these standards the decisions of Councils were regulated, and when a decision was made it became universally binding. On the point to which it related, reference to Scripture was of course superfluous. The question was set at rest, to the mind of a faithful Catholic. If any man

* See Mosheim, Cent. v. Part 2. Chap. 3. and Cent. vi. Part 2. Chap. 3.

ventured to question its correspondence with Scripture, astonishment was expressed at his arrogance, who set up his private judgment in opposition to that of so many learned divines ; and the event seemed a proof to the interested and the servile, of the truth of an idea which the prevailing taste approved, that the Scriptures were so liable to be abused and perverted, that it was not safe to trust them in the hands of the vulgar. It soon became evident that the inspired writings were not sufficient to teach what passed under the name of the christian religion. In proportion as innovations were adopted and decrees multiplied, the sacred volume fell into disrepute among the clergy ; in the gross darkness of the middle ages, when few could read, and fewer still were anxious to investigate the things of God, it sunk into general oblivion ; and when in the Sixteenth century public attention was again directed to it, it was found to be too favourable to the Reformers, and too hostile to the Romish hierarchy, to be tolerated by the advocates of existing abuses.

Having now traced the origin of the fundamental principles of this anti-christian system, it is not necessary to investigate in a distinct manner the rise of each of its subordinate parts. The

scriptures being set aside, and the authority of the Clergy established, every thing went on, with scarcely any interruption, as the policy or the passions of the priesthood dictated. Various causes, indeed, contributed to produce those superstitious observances, those idolatrous rites, those impious dispensations, and those tyrannical institutions, to which our thoughts have been directed. A perverse imitation of the practices of heathen worship, was one of the most fertile sources of these abominations; an imitation in some cases openly avowed, and defended on the plea that Christianity would thus be rendered more palatable to the votaries of the pagan gods. The natural propensity of the human mind to place religion in external forms, and substitute bodily homage and elaborate ceremonials, for spiritual service and purity of heart, conduced greatly to the corruption of gospel ordinances, and the admiration of that pretended merit which consisted in the sacrifice of domestic comfort, and social usefulness. But the love of wealth and grandeur, of adulation and homage, which pervaded all ranks of the Clergy, the anxious desire they felt for every thing which could augment veneration for their persons, and submission to their will, did more than any thing else to generate

these abuses. To this ambitious spirit, we may trace auricular confession, that master-piece of despotism, which secured with greater certainty than the celebrated ear of Dionysius, a knowledge of every whisper which issued from the lips of its victims. To this we may trace the celibacy of the Clergy, the most pernicious of all the devices which hypocrisy ever promoted, but one of the most politic; as it alienated from every interest but that of the church, and made the aggrandizement of the body the exclusive object of every member of the priesthood. To this we may trace the pompous titles, the splendid vestments, the purchased masses, the sainted shrines, the gothic abbeys, the attractive indulgences, the inquisitorial dungeons, the secret trials, and the public executions; all, all were designed to acquire or preserve, to the professed ministers of religion, supreme authority over the souls and bodies of their fellow mortals. That power has been the favourite object of successive Roman Pontiffs, the history of past centuries indisputably proves. And power seems to be the favourite object of the Roman Pontiff now. Hence he invites the rich, the noble, and the royal believers in his ability to remit the penalties of sin, to present themselves before him, to

do homage at his see, and to contribute to his magnificence. And hence he invokes the aid of friendly sovereigns to interpose on his behalf, and confirm his tottering throne; and calls on his clergy to display a renovated ardour on behalf of established delusions. At the head of that priesthood which once revelled in luxury, fearless, and arrogant, but now perceives that the craft is endangered, by which its elevation was obtained; he issues his inflammatory addresses to the workmen of like occupation, with all the ardour of Demetrius, and prescribes anew that hated, dreaded volume, which exposes his impostures, and predicts his fall.

We should wrong past ages, were we not, while meditating on the gradual rise of those corruptions which perverted the churches of antiquity, to call to recollection the resistance which in many cases the innovations excited. Lamentations were uttered by the more spiritual over the prevailing degeneracy, and remonstrances sometimes issued from their lips; their voices, however, were but little heeded, being drowned in the tumultuous clamour of violent and ambitious men. In the third century, the Novatians arose, who continued throughout the fourth in separation from the Imperial Church, though they re-

ceived its leading doctrines which were not yet materially corrupted. These maintained much stricter discipline than the dominant sect, by whom they were reviled as *Cathari* or Puritans. Soon afterwards the Donatists sprung up in Africa, whose principal crimes, appear to have been according to the accusations of their revilers, that they adhered to Novatian purity of discipline, and re-baptized those who joined their societies, denying the validity of that Baptism which was administered in the Church of Rome; probably on account of the unscriptural additions which were already introduced.* In the fifth century,

* “Baptismal fonts were now erected in the porch of each church, for the more commodious administration of that initiating sacrament. Baptism was administered during the vigils of Easter and Whitsuntide, with lighted tapers by the bishop, and the Presbyters commissioned by him for that purpose. In cases however of urgent necessity, and in such only, a dispensation was granted for performing this sacred rite at other times than those now mentioned. In some places *salt* was employed as a symbol of purity and wisdom, and was thrown with this view, into the mouth of the person baptized; and a *double unction* was every where used in the celebration of this ordinance, one preceding its administration, and the other following it. The persons who were admitted into the church by baptism, were obliged, after the celebration of that holy ordinance, to go clothed in white garments during the space of seven days.”—*Mosheim*, Cent. iv. Part 2. Chap. 4.

Ærius formed many distinct societies of Christians in Armenia, Pontus, and Cappadocia, who condemned prayers for the dead, stated fasts, and the celebration of Easter; who denied that Bishops were distinguished from Presbyters by any divine right; and who wished to restore Christianity to its primitive simplicity. In the seventh century, the Paulicians arose in Asia Minor, whose distinctive name was derived from their attachment to the writings of Paul, and who professed to draw their tenets exclusively from the New Testament. In Italy itself, during these successive periods, there appear to have been some who refused to submit to the domination of the Popes, and at the hazard of their lives protested against the prevailing corruptions of the Romish Church. And shortly afterwards the Albigenses and the Waldenses, in the south of France, and in the vallies of Piedmont, against whom whole armies were led forth, and who sustained the rage of the Apostate Church through several centuries, furnished the materials for a narrative, more interesting as well as more instructive to a Christian reader, than the most admired works of fiction.

In concluding, permit me to remind you of the importance of forming your ideas of Chris-

tianity from the representations of its purest writers. I mean not modern teachers, however high their reputation; or, however excellent their works; these are not the standard of our faith; they like ourselves are fallible. I mean not the first Reformers, to whom we are much indebted for the zeal they evinced, and the example they set; they were but partially freed from the ignorance of their contemporaries, and most of them derived a bias from some one or other of the vicious modes of interpretation which the Church of Rome had introduced. I mean not the ancient writers, denominated the Fathers,—the teachers of the second, and succeeding centuries; they lived in a degenerating period; some partook less than others of the prevailing corruptions, but the mystery of iniquity was at work, and none of them were invulnerable to its attacks. But I mean those inspired men whose accounts of the actions and discourses of their beloved Lord, were written, not by the mere aid of natural memory, but by the assistance of that Spirit, whose agency was promised to guide them into all the truth, and bring all things to remembrance that Jesus had spoken in their hearing; and whose letters to the Churches were couched, not in lan-

guage dictated by human wisdom, but by the special communications of the Holy Ghost:—the men who could say in confirmation of their doctrine, “He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who also hath given unto us his Holy Spirit.” Here the system shines forth in its simple beauty ; and hence its nature and tendency must be judged.

The opponents of revealed truth are accustomed to declaim against the conduct of its professed friends. “What wars,” say they, “has the religion of Jesus excited! What cruelties has it authorized! What murders has it caused! What ambition has it cherished! The history of Christianity is written in blood! Pagans have been men of virtue. Pontiffs have been notorious villains! Can this religion be from God?” But how fallacious this kind of reasoning is, if reasoning it may be called, you, my brethren, can readily perceive. The religion of Jesus Christ, as taught by Jesus Christ, is only to be found unadulterated in the New Testament. Does the New Testament countenance ambition or vice? It foretold with abhorrence an apostacy; can the fruits of that apostacy be fairly urged as an argument against it? It foretold that

grievous wolves should arise to devour the flock ; can the ravages of these wolves disprove its divinity ? It foretold that in “ the latter times some should depart from the faith ; giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy ; ” ought we then to judge its character from the writings or conduct of teachers of the latter times ? No ! if we wish to know what christianity is, either that we may determine the legitimacy of its claims, or that as humble learners we may receive its dictates, let us apply ourselves to the study of the unadulterated words of Christ and his Apostles.

Now if you adopt this course you will perceive the stress which is uniformly laid in the book of God, *on the religion of the heart*.— There you are taught that the form of godliness will avail you nothing without its power.— The want of this, you have seen, was the fruitful source of the great apostacy. And it is important to you all to know and to feel that unless your affections are subjugated to the Gospel, however correct your opinions, and however excellent the Church to which you belong, you are not christians.

May this consideration lead you to look with humble faith to that Saviour, who is able to renew

and regulate the heart ; and may you receive from him supplies of grace, to transform you into his likeness, and to fix your affections on those spiritual objects, which will yield unabated delight, when earthly pleasure shall have passed away, and when earthly plaudits shall be forgotten !

LECTURE V.

ON ITS TENDENCY.

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“ And many shall follow their pernicious ways ; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”— 2 Peter ii. 2.

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THE principal question we have to consider this evening is what effects that system is adapted to produce, to which our thoughts have been directed on several recent occasions ; the system which is now and long has been, more prevalent than any other among professed christians. You have seen from the representations given to you of the principles of Popery that they differ widely from your own. You have found from the specimens laid before you of its worship and authorized customs, that they are unscriptural in their character. You have perceived from evidence adduced that its hold on the mind of its adherents is maintained with great pertinacity, and that it

wages interminable war against all who submit not to its sway. You have ascertained from the history of its rise, that it crept insidiously into the Church of Christ, under the influence of a worldly and domineering spirit. You are now invited to contemplate its *tendency*. Ought we to consider it a collection of harmless mistakes, or a combination of deadly errors? Is the controversy between those who impugn and those who defend it, a mere question of words and names, of quibbles and punctilios, of unimportant ceremonies, and fruitless speculations; or does it involve the fundamentals of religion? What is the aspect of this system towards individuals, towards society, and towards God?

The subject is important, not to the politician only, but also to the philanthropist. To every friend of light it must be an interesting inquiry, whether the dark cloud which hangs over the Continent of Europe, be merely a twilight gloom, or the total obscurity of midnight. The man especially who earnestly desires that his fellow mortals should enjoy the blessings of everlasting life, will wish to know whether the path marked out by the Pope and Cardinals, be merely a more circuitous road to heaven than that which he himself travels, or whether it be a direct line to the regions of endless

misery. This ought also to be ascertained, that we may be able to determine the manner in which our hostilities against it should be conducted.

Now it does appear to me that it is the natural tendency of this system—three solemn charges I am aware are about to leave my lips—charges which ought not to be made thus publicly without deliberate thought—but it does appear to me, after much patient reflection, that it is the natural tendency of this system, to promote ignorance,—irreligion,—and infidelity.

I wish, however, to deal equitably, both with Popery and with its supporters; and therefore before I proceed to illustrate these ideas, will make two or three admissions, to prevent misconstruction of my meaning.

I admit in the first place that in the doctrine taught by the Church of Rome there is an admixture of good and evil. In the midst of much error there is some truth. With much that is baneful there are some things excellent. Though habitually the discourses of the Romish clergy are sadly defective, you might sometimes hear from them very evangelical representations of the person, the character, and the work of Christ. Though much is enjoined by them which you

would strongly disapprove, some important exhortations are also given, and imperative duties are enforced.

My second admission is, that among the adherents of Popery, there are many who do not participate in its spirit. As there are nominal Protestants who are not influenced by the sentiments to which they subscribe, but who act in opposition to them ; so there are nominal Papists, whose hearts are not moulded into the form it is adapted to impose. Particularly is that the case with the Roman Catholics of this country, whose exemption from the despotism that is exercised where the government is Popish, and where the evil operates with unmitigated violence, has caused them to disapprove much which Spaniards or Italians professing the same faith would unreservedly extol. Among them are many persons whose minds are considerably enlightened, whose views are liberal, and whose feelings are tolerant.

I admit further, that there are individuals in communion with the See of Rome, whose piety we have no reason to doubt. A pleasing persuasion may be indulged, I think, with propriety, that the reliance of many who venerate the Pope, as head of the Church on earth, is placed on the

atoning sacrifice of Christ, that their professed desire to serve the Redeemer is sincere, and that their own consciences condemn them not in those things which they practice.

I should not think it honourable to go through this course of Lectures without making mention especially of one, who for several years past, has been doing the work of God on the Continent of Europe, with assiduity, zeal, and intrepidity, which well entitle him to rank with Luther. No lover of good men ought to be ignorant of the name of Leander Van Ess. Why he should choose to continue in the Church of Rome, I cannot tell; reasons, or prejudices—it is not my province to say which—satisfy his conscience; they would not it is probable be satisfactory to mine; but it is to his Master only he has to answer; I will claim him as a fellow-servant, while I see that under the garb of a priest, he is doing the work of a Reformer. Not only do his letters breathe a spirit of piety which would be creditable to a martyr; not only does he distribute without scruple, to those by whom he is surrounded, Protestant versions of the Bible; he has himself translated the New Testament into the language of his countrymen, and assisted in distributing with truly christian benevolence, not thousands of copies only, but

hundreds of thousands. “ In the kingdom of
“ Wurtemberg,” Dr. Pinkerton writes in 1821,
“ there have been circulated upwards of 38,000
“ copies of his Testament; in the States of
“ Baden, 20,000; in Switzerland, 10,000; in
“ the Austrian dominions, 24,500; in Bavaria
“ about 3,000; in Nassau, 10,000; in the States
“ of Darmstadt, upwards of 10,000; in and
“ about Elberfeld, 3,000; in the country about
“ Munster, 2,000; in and near Osnabruck, 6,000;
“ in the Principality of Hildesheim, 10,000; in
“ Silesia upwards of 30,000; in and around
“ Franckfort on the Main, 10,000; in the country
“ around Fulda, 5,000. In addition to these
“ general items, there have been 239,663 copies
“ circulated in smaller numbers, and through
“ various channels in every part of Germany,
“ and other countries of Europe where German
“ Catholics are found. Thus the whole issues
“ of Van Ess’s Testament, up to the present
“ date, have been 421,163 copies.”* Surely
we may call him brother, and fellow labourer
in the service of God, for as he himself has
remarked, “ no work can be more justly called
his, than the diffusion of his word.”

* Eighteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society,
Appendix, p. 39.

But while these pleasing facts are adduced, the rest must also be told. If I acknowledge that in Popery there is a portion of good, I must also say that the evil so awfully predominates as not only to neutralize the good, but in many cases even to pervert it to injurious purposes. If I admit that among its supporters there are many who do not participate in its spirit, I must add that no credit is on this account due to the system: their mental constitution or favourable habits, may have given them strength enough to resist the poison in the dose in which it has been administered, but it is poison still. If I avow my belief that there are men of piety attached to the Romish scheme, I must also maintain that it is in spite of its tendency; and that they are opposed, and thwarted, and disliked, by those who occupy the highest stations in the Church. I still therefore adhere to the opinion, and wish to impart it to you, that Popery is naturally adapted to produce ignorance, irreligion, and infidelity.

That Popery tends to produce *ignorance of religious truth*, you can scarcely fail to have remarked while listening to former addresses.—Ignorance of scripture must necessarily result from that prohibition which forbids the general circulation of the inspired writings. Ignorance

of the services of the Church must accrue from that custom which causes the worship to be performed in an unknown language. And ignorance of the doctrines of Christianity must naturally arise from the belief in the efficacy of implicit faith. What motive can I have to inquire, to endeavour to understand my teacher, or to retain the instruction he imparts, if the right of private judgment be taken from me? If the perfection of faith be a blind reliance on the correctness of the Church's doctrine,—a reliance which may consist with ignorance of what it teaches, I am better without knowledge than with it; for a little knowledge may occasion doubt, and lead me into heresy. If I read, I shall think; if I think, I shall reason; if I reason, I shall form my own opinion; my opinion thus acquired may be contrary to that of my spiritual guides; if publicly expressed it may expose me to penance in this world; and if not retracted it may lead to perdition in the next. But while I think nothing—care nothing about the matter, I am safe, I cannot be a heretic; I know nothing but by proxy, but the Church knows all, and with the Church I leave it.

It has become fashionable among irreligious sceptics to praise the uniformity of the Church

of Rome. ‘You Protestants,’ say they, ‘are divided into innumerable sects. There is no end of your contentions. Your places of worship multiply with every schism. A new Conventicle is displaying its ghastly front in every street. Oh! the blessed days before the Reformation, when all was peace and unity.’ True it is that external uniformity is in some respects maintained in the Romish Church; but it has its parties, its controversies, and its animosities; deadly feuds are cherished in its bosom; its disputants anathematize each other without mercy, and appeal to miracles wrought by their friends, to the writings of the Fathers, or to the authority of Doctors of renown. True it is that in some past centuries in Britain, there were no religious disputes among the common people; there was peace—the peace of a burial place; all were quiet, for all were dead. There was uniformity,—such uniformity as there is on scientific subjects in a horde of West Indian savages; all being equally unacquainted with principles and details. If these men think that ignorance is bliss, they need not stay in Britain; Britain can spare them well; let them hasten to the back settlements of America; let them penetrate the forests; there lies the paradise of fools; there they may find ignorance in

perfection, among the wandering tribes of their red brethren.

The influence of Popery is hostile to the spread of literary and scientific knowledge as well as to religious. The spirit of inquiry is repressed ; a dread of the prevalence of an investigating temper prevails ; and an approximation to heresy is sometimes thought to lurk in philosophic speculations. The *Index Expurgatorius*, is not exclusively occupied with references to theological books ; works of science, history, politics, and amusement, fall beneath the cognizance of its authors. Books on any of these subjects, even though written by “ the faithful,” are sometimes treated like the poor sufferer on the bed of Procrustes ; what is too short is stretched, and what is too long is lopped away.

Such was the prevailing ignorance at the dawn of the Reformation, that accounts transmitted to us by the writers of the times seem scarcely credible. Many of the priests, it is said, were unable to read their own Breviary, though it comprised nearly the whole Cyclopædia of their knowledge. The faculty of Theology at Paris, declared before the assembled Parliament, that religion was undone, if the study of Greek and Hebrew were permitted. But a still finer speci-

men of controversial accuracy and literary skill is afforded us in the account of a Monk, who gravely assured his auditory, that the Reformers had invented a new language called Greek, against which it was necessary for them to be on their guard, it being the mother of all heresy ;— that a book was written in that language called the New Testament, a book full of daggers and poison ; and that as to Hebrew, it was certain that all who learnt it immediately became Jews.*

These, perhaps, you will say are tales of former centuries, and insufficient proofs of the state of knowledge among Roman Catholics now. It is granted that a spirit of inquiry, which the Reformation greatly contributed to produce, has penetrated some dark recesses of superstition, and is producing a favourable change. But alas ! the extent of knowledge, particularly of religious knowledge, in countries in which the papal system is in full operation, is very small. The excellent Catholic, whose name I have mentioned, says in a letter, written in the year 1816, “ I have laid, with frankness, before the King of
“ Prussia, the following view, by no means ex-

* Jones’s History of the Christian Church, vol. ii. p. 302.

“ aggerated, of the great want of Bibles among
“ the Catholics in his States :

“ 1. There are many—very many Catholic
“ Priests, who very probably, have not a whole
“ Bible in their possession, either in Latin or
“ German, and do not even possess a German
“ New Testament.

“ 2. Among Schoolmasters, hardly one in
“ five hundred has a German Bible, and hardly
“ one in two hundred possesses a New Testa-
“ ment.

“ 3. Among Laymen scarcely one in one
“ thousand is in possession of the New Testa-
“ ment much less of a whole Bible.”*

What a representation does this give of the blindness of these leaders of the blind! But the efforts made to hinder him and his few simple hearted colleagues from remedying the evil, shew that it does not belong to the genius of the system to deplore or attempt to remove it. The endeavours made to extinguish the lamp, demonstrate a love of darkness. Referring to the work of a fellow labourer, he says, “ The New Testament, by Gossner, is now forbidden here.

* Thirteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Appendix, p. 220.

“ Jesuits, Franciscans, and all the Clergy, high
“ and low, learned and unlearned, have set
“ their faces against it, and are resolutely de-
“ termined to extinguish it. The Papal Bull is
“ equally severe.”* His own Testament also
being prohibited through the inveterate hostility
of the Jesuits and their agents, he still deter-
mined to go forward with a firm step, to obey
God rather than man, and to spread in every
direction the everlasting truths of the gospel.
But he thus adverts to the opposition of his ec-
clesiastical superiors. “ Behold, my respected
“ brother in the Lord, an explicit avowal of that
“ conviction, which I do not wish to force upon
“ any one, but which I plead before the Father
“ of Lights, with all the power of prayer, that
“ he may enlighten the rulers of our Church to
“ see, that to withhold the Bible from the peo-
“ ple, is not the way to give to the Catholic
“ Church dignity, stability, or power. I fear
“ lest it should happen in the Church, as it has
“ happened elsewhere, that the collective feeling
“ of an offended and injured people should one

* Sixteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society,
Appendix, p. 157.

“ day prove too strong for Bulls and Excommunications.”*

Nor does literature flourish more than religion, in an atmosphere unfavourable to freedom of inquiry. Exceptions may be found, but generally it appears that knowledge is far more extensively diffused in Protestant States than in countries entirely Catholic. A clergyman of the Church of England, equally eminent for his piety and talents, who has recently returned from a tour on several parts of the Continent, and has given the world an account of some of his remarks, notices particularly this circumstance. He speaks of the Valais, a Canton of Switzerland, adjoining to Italy, the population of which is exclusively Popish; where 100,000 persons reside, but among whom there is not one bookseller! A single printer was found living at Sion, the capital of the Canton, but he was allowed to work only under the direction of the Jesuits, who have the superintendence of education there; and printed nothing but books of devotion.† At Chamberry,

* Fourteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Appendix, p. 154.

† Letters from an absent Brother, vol. ii. p. 87.

in France, a city which contains nearly ten thousand souls, he found a Cathedral, and three other Churches, two Convents, and about one hundred Priests; but only one bookseller, and his stock consisted but of one book, a code of French Laws.* “The town of Domo d’Osola,” he writes, “has about three thousand inhabitants. There is no bookseller in the place—“ I mark this fact where it occurs, as drawing “after it a thousand consequences. As we “entered Italy by Isella, our baggage was “searched; and the officer told us plainly, the “objects he looked after were books of religion and politics—morals are left to themselves. Happily our passports were signed by “the Austrian Ambassador, or we should have “had to retrace our steps. On driving into the “town, I was surprised to see Priests, in their “peculiardress, but somewhat shabbily attired, “standing about idly, or sitting in the market-place, at the doors of caberets, in company “with the common people. Their jovial, careless sort of look, struck me as characteristic of “the manners of too many of that order of persons in Italy. The chief Church here is of

* Ut supra, vol. ii. p. 152.

“ modern Greek architecture ; there are three
“ altogether, and about fifteen Priests. A Con-
“ vent of Capuchins, suppressed by Napoleon,
“ has just been restored. When we asked the
“ innkeeper what curiosities there were in the
“ town, he said, there was only a Calvary,
“ a superstitious chapel, or temple, on some
“ mountain, with a representation of our Saviour’s
“ passion. We are now in Italy ; but oh ! how
“ fallen is it ! Oh ! how melancholy to think of
“ the lost glory of the queen of nations ! Igno-
“ rance, poverty, dirt, indolence, misery, vice,
“ superstition, are but too visible on all sides.
“ Half the time in fact which God assigned to
“ man for labour, is consumed in superstitious
“ festivals of Saints ; while the one day of sa-
“ cred rest is desecrated to folly and sin.”*

These indeed are melancholy facts ; but we need not be surprised at their existence. They are but natural consequences of that domination which the Romish Clergy assume. Their ascendancy can be maintained more easily over the profoundly ignorant, than over men whose superior intelligence would lead to an examination of ecclesiastical claims. It is to their interest

* Ut supra, vol. ii. p. 101.

therefore that knowledge should be repressed, as it was to the interest of the ancient Philistines that no smith should be found throughout all the land of Israel, lest the Hebrews should make themselves swords and spears.

But I have charged Popery, in the second place, with a tendency to promote *irreligion*; and must now beg you to examine the truth of this accusation. You will not, however, understand me to mean that it requires no effort of the body, no homage to the priest, no contribution from the purse; but that the spirit of Christianity may be neglected by the votary of Popery while he attends to its dictates, and that the great ends of religion are rather hindered than assisted by its rites. There are sacrifices which must be made, and painful observances which must be regarded; but they are such as will leave you exposed to the force of the divine interrogation, "Who hath required this at your hands?" Do I see a man bowing before an altar erected to the honour of the Virgin Mary, presenting costly gifts, offering fervent requests, begging her intercession on his behalf; however sincere and earnest he may be, I cannot call *that* religion. Do I see a man gazing with unmeaning admiration on the actions of the Priest, listening to prayers, not a

syllable of which he understands, soothed with solemn music, satiated with odoriferous incense ; his senses may be gratified, his spirit may be elated, but I cannot call *that* religion. Do I see a man retiring from the habitations of his species to dwell in solitude, a hermit on the bleak top of a lonely mountain, or immuring himself with others of kindred taste, within the walls of a secluded cloister ; I grant that he denies himself some pleasures, but I cannot join in plaudits of his piety, for I do not call *that* religion. Do I see a man feasting his eyes with the writhing agonies of some helpless fellow mortal, who is condemned as a heretic, and is consuming in the flames which superstition has kindled round him ; though he shout and praise God loudly for the triumphs of the Church, I cannot call *that* religion. Religion is holy ; it teaches men to “ deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,” and to “ live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ;” but Popery cherishes a spirit of carelessness about those sins which it denominates venial, and opens various marts for pardon, for the convenience of the wealthy lover of iniquity. Religion is devotional ; it teaches that God is a Spirit, and that “ they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth ;” but Popery

is satisfied with acquiescence in its dogmas, and observance of its practices, though the love of God be wanting. Religion is reasonable; it involves an exercise of mind; faith arising from evidence, and trust from knowledge of the excellencies of him in whom confidence is placed; but Popery admits you to understand by proxy, and worship without acquaintance with the nature of the praises which you utter. Religion conforms the heart of its possessor to the likeness of the Saviour; but Popery conceals his character from view.

Some observations made on this subject by the excellent Clergyman to whom I have adverted, are so pertinent and expressive, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of laying them before you. Referring to a conversation with an Italian lady, he says, “The point I insisted upon was, “that the Church of Rome had gradually lost “the simple and scriptural meaning of each part “of Christ’s religion, and had substituted a gross “external sense instead of it. Thus, for the “spiritual invisible Church, the outward Church “of Rome was substituted; and for Christ its “head, the Pope; for feeding by faith on the “body and blood of Christ, transubstantiation; “for repentance, penance; for confession of “sins before God, auricular confession to a

“ Priest; for prayer to God from the heart, vain
“ repetitions of pater-nosters; for reverence and
“ honour, to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, religious, and in fact, idolatrous worship; for
“ secret holy love to the Saviour, images and
“ crucifixes; for reliance on the satisfaction and
“ atonement of Christ only, the sacrifice of the
“ mass, pilgrimages, lacerations, merits of Saints,
“ indulgences, purgatory, &c.; and for the influence of the Holy Spirit, merit of congruity,
“ mere external and unassisted efforts, incense,
“ lights ever burning, &c.; and so of all the
“ rest.”*

These ideas, however unfavourable to the Romish Church will not appear unjust, if you consider the manner in which its public services are conducted, and the employments in which the day which should be devoted to God is spent, where all is subject to its unmitigated influence. A Sabbath at Milan—where we may expect to find the real tendency of Popery exemplified, is thus described by this Christian Minister. “ I
“ have witnessed to-day, with grief and indignation, all the superstitions of Popery in their
“ full triumph. In other towns the neighbourhood of Protestantism has been some check

* Letters from an absent Brother, vol. ii. p. 216.

“ on the display of idolatry ; but here, in Italy,
“ where a Protestant is scarcely tolerated, ex-
“ cept in the Chapels of Ambassadors, all follow
“ the guidance and authority of the Pope. At
“ half-past ten this morning we went to the Ca-
“ thedral, where seats were obtained for us in
“ the gallery, near the altar. We saw the
“ whole of the proceedings ; Priests almost
“ without end ; incense, singing, music, pro-
“ ceSSIONS, perpetual changes of dress ; four
“ persons with mitres, whom we were told were
“ Bishops ; a crowd of people coming in and
“ going out, and staring around them ; but not
“ one prayer, not one verse of the Holy Scrip-
“ tures intelligible to the people, not even if they
“ knew Latin, nor one word of a sermon ; in
“ short, it was nothing more nor less than a
“ PAGAN SHOW. We returned to our inn, and
“ after our English service, we went to see the
“ Catechising. This was founded by Borromeo,
“ in the Sixteenth century, and is peculiar to the
“ diocese of Milan. The children meet in classes
“ of ten or twenty, drawn up between the pillars
“ of the vast Cathedral, and separated from each
“ other by curtains, the boys on one side, the
“ girls on the other. In all the Churches of the
“ city there are classes also. Many grown peo-

“ ple were mingled with the children. A Priest
“ sat in the midst of each class, and seemed to
“ be explaining familiarly the Christian religion.
“ The sight was quite interesting. Tables for
“ learning to write were placed in different re-
“ cesses. The children were exceedingly atten-
“ tive. At the door of each school the words,
“ *Pax vobis*, Peace be unto you, were inscribed
“ on a board; the names of the scholars were
“ also on boards. Each school had a small pulpit,
“ with a green cloth in front, bearing the Borro-
“ mean motto, *Humilitas*. Now what can in
“ itself be more excellent than all this? But
“ mark the corruption of Popery; these poor
“ children were all made members of a frater-
“ nity, and purchase indulgences for their sins
“ by coming to school. A brief of the Pope,
“ dated 1609, affords a perpetual indulgence to
“ the children, in a sort of running lease of six
“ thousand years, eight thousand years, &c. and
“ these indulgencies are applicable to the re-
“ covering souls out of purgatory; then the
“ prayers before school, are full of error and
“ idolatry. All this I saw with my own eyes
“ and heard with my own ears; for I was curious
“ to understand the bearings of these celebrated
“ schools. Thus is the infant mind fettered and

“ chained. Still I do not doubt that much good
“ may be done on the whole ; the Catholic Ca-
“ techisms contain admirable instructions, and
“ much evangelical matter, though mixed up
“ with folly and superstition. After dinner, at
“ half-past three we had our second English ser-
“ vice, and then were hurried out to see, what
“ you will think incredible in a christian country,
“ altars set up in the open air to the Virgin
“ Mary, with hangings, festoons of lamps,
“ Priests offering prayers, the streets hung with
“ lamps on cords stretched across them, the
“ houses and squares gaily adorned with carpets
“ and lights ; the Churches open and illuminated,
“ with crowds passing in and out ; while Priests
“ were giving relics to kiss to the devotees, who
“ came kneeling at the altar in the most rapid
“ succession ; and soldiers were parading about
“ to keep in order the assembled mobs. I never
“ was so astonished in all my life. Religion
“ was in fact turned into an OPEN NOISY AMUSE-
“ MENT. Before the Cathedral itself, there was
“ an amazing crowd to witness *Punch and his*
“ *wife*—literally, Punch and his wife ; Priests
“ were mingled in the crowd ; and the thing is
“ so much a matter of course, that every picture
“ of this Cathedral has, I understand, Punch

“ and his auditory in the fore ground ; thus the
“ farce is kept up throughout this sacred day.
“ And what is all this but the ceremonies of
“ ancient Roman Heathenism, coloured over
“ with modern Roman Christianity ? The re-
“ semblance between Popery and Paganism in
“ Italy, strikes every impartial observer. There
“ are the same prostrations—the same offerings
“ —the same incense—the same processions—
“ the same votive tablets—the same adoration
“ of images—the same vows, pomps, revellings,
“ &c. the names of things only are changed.
“ And oh, what a lamentable, what a heart-
“ breaking reflection is it, that the Sabbath is
“ quite unknown here as the day of sanctifica-
“ tion and holy rest ! Doubtless in so vast a
“ population there are many secret disciples of
“ the Lord Christ, who ‘ sigh and cry for all the
“ abominations that be done in the midst there-
“ of :’ but to the mass of the people, the Sunday
“ is forgotten, obliterated, lost,—nay, it is turned
“ into the very worst day of all the week—no
“ idea enters their minds of the divine purpose
“ and mercy in it ; ‘ I gave them my Sabbaths,
“ to be a sign between me and them, that they
“ might know that I am the Lord that sanctify
“ them.’ I should conceive there are but very,

“ very few Bibles amongst all this population of
“ one hundred and fifty thousand souls. O what
“ do Protestant countries owe to Luther, Calvin,
“ Zuingle, Cranmer, Ridley, Knox, &c. who,
“ under God, rescued them from similar dark-
“ ness ! And what obligations are they under
“ to walk in the light whilst they have it !”*

To one more extract from the same devout observer, I must request your attention ; as it contains several suggestions which deserve serious reflection. “ It is moreover very observable,” he remarks “ that where Popery is now reviving
“ in its influence, after the French revolutionary
“ struggles, or the iron laws of Bonaparte, it re-
“ turns with all its folly about it. It is not learn-
“ ing a lesson of wisdom, and silently following
“ its Pascals and Fénétons, and dropping some of
“ its grosser corruptions ; but reassumes all its
“ arts, its impositions, its ceremonies, its in-
“ cense, its processions, its pilgrimages, its
“ image worship, its exclusive claims, its domi-
“ nation over the conscience, its opposition to
“ the scriptures, its hatred of education ; and
“ this in the full face of day, and in the nine-
“ teenth century, and with infidelity watching

* Letters from an absent Brother, vol. ii. p. 122.

“ for objections to our common Christianity.
“ And what is the general moral effect of this
“ system ? It neither sanctifies nor saves. A
“ depth of vice, glossed over with outward
“ forms of decency, eats as doth a canker. Vo-
“ luptuousness, impurity, dishonesty, cunning,
“ hypocrisy, every vice prevails, just as Popery
“ has the more complete sway. The dreadful
“ profanation of the Sabbath, has by proscrip-
“ tion become fixed. All the holy ends of it are
“ forgotten, unknown, obliterated. It is the ha-
“ bitual season of unrestrained pleasure. I speak
“ generally ; for there are doubtless multitudes
“ of individual Catholics, who serve God in sin-
“ cerity and truth ; and who disregarding the
“ accumulations heaped on the foundation of the
“ faith, build on Jesus Christ and him crucified.
“ There is one class of persons in Catholic
“ countries, which I compassionate from my
“ heart. They are not sunk into superstition,
“ nor have they imbibed the piety of true disci-
“ ples of Christ ; but having been educated
“ during the revolution, have acquired a general
“ boldness and liberality of sentiment ; see
“ through much of the mummery of Popery ;
“ detect the spirit and aims of a worldly-minded
“ Priesthood ; are disgusted at the revival of

“ the Jesuits ; the opposition to the Bible So-
“ ciety ; the resistance to education ; the dis-
“ turbance and removal of the most pious and
“ worthy masters and professors, the persecution
“ of the Protestants, &c. And yet they are not
“ in earnest enough about religion to take a de-
“ cided part ; the objections of infidels dwell
“ upon their minds—the fear of reproach pre-
“ vents their quitting the Roman communion—
“ there is nothing in the Protestantism they
“ are acquainted with, to show them a more ex-
“ cellent way. Thus they glide down the fatal
“ stream with others, dissatisfied and yet un-
“ converted.”*

Is there now any one present who thinks it is too much to affirm that Popery tends to irreligion ? Is there any thing in the sort of service here described which can be acceptable to the pure—the heart-searching maker ? Is there any thing in this adapted to transform the spirit, to change the bias of the soul, to withdraw the affections from earth, and to prepare for the spiritual delights of heaven ? Is there any thing here to produce reliance on the providential care of God, patient submission to afflictive dis-

* Ut supra, vol. ii. p. 254.

pensations, ardent gratitude for favours received, or universal benevolence to mankind? All is form, routine, pomp, amusement;—humility and love, faith and spiritual mindedness are neither possessed nor sought. There may be zeal, but it is zeal without knowledge; there may be confidence, but it is confidence without basis; there may be joy, but it is not joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom only we can receive atonement.

I remarked in the third place, that Popery tends to produce *infidelity*, and after what has been advanced, it will not I apprehend be necessary to say much to corroborate this assertion. No well informed person needs to be apprised that infidelity prevails on the Continent of Europe in a very great degree. It is within the recollection of many of you, that in a neighbouring country, a few years ago, its abettors gained the ascendancy and established it by law. They abolished the Sabbath; prohibited Christian ordinances; proclaimed death to be a perpetual sleep, decreed that the being of God was a fable; and set up an infamous woman to be worshipped as the goddess of reason! And now though the name of Christ is again pronounced with respect by the rulers of that country, and the Catholic Church

reinstated in its honours, it is well known that in France, in Spain, in Portugal, and in Italy, the greater part of educated men, are either sceptics or confirmed unbelievers.

But it will be asked why charge this on Popery? I reply, because the principles, and practices of Popery are calculated to produce it! Infidelity has been called, not inaptly, *Popery run to seed*. With a certain degree of light—a degree not unfrequently occurring—a thinking man in a Catholic country is likely to renounce all veneration for the Christian name. He has to judge of Christianity only by what he sees and hears.—The Christianity of the Romish Church is the only species of Christianity within his cognizance. With the Christianity of the New Testament he is unacquainted. He does not possess the scriptures—they are prohibited and scarce; nor have his religious instructors ever suggested the idea that the inspired writings contain the principles of Christian faith. If among us any begin to question the divinity of our religion, we immediately appeal to the book of God: consider, we say, the purity of its spirit, the consistency of its parts, the sublimity of its representations, its correspondence with the heart of man, and its adaptation to his necessities. But to all these

marks of its heavenly original, the doubting Papist is necessarily a stranger. Even the external evidence of its authenticity has been withheld; it has been considered enough for him to know that it has the sanction of the Church. But in truth he has never been taught to think about it, nor is any reference to it so prominent in the sort of Christianity with which he is conversant, as to cause it to attract his attention. The only means he has of judging of the religion of Jesus Christ is what he sees and hears from the Romish Clergy. What is it then that is to satisfy his scruples, or excite his faith? Is it the pompous ceremonial, the mummerly without meaning, or the adoration of deceased fellow mortals? Is it the bloody persecutions of which history informs him, or the intolerant temper which he witnesses in his spiritual guides? Is it the detected priestcraft, the sham miracles, the solemn grimace, or the ridiculous legend? Is it the notoriously licentious conduct of many of the priests around him, their rapacity and their pride? Is it the manifest dependance of the whole system on secular power, and the evident tendency of its institutions to aggrandize the clergy at the expense of men of every other rank? All these things tend to disgust him, and to alienate his heart. All

seems to him to be worldly, and he is right in the opinion. Hypocrisy appears to him to shine through the veil of solemn splendour, and we cannot wonder at his decision. Nor will it cost him any considerable effort to shake off the yoke as far as conscience only is concerned. It is only to cease from external observances, or to go through them for reputation and safety sake, with outward regularity and mental indifference. The transition is not great from assent without evidence, to unbelief; from ignorant acquiescence in the truth of scripture, to positive rejection of its authority. It would not cost the infidels of Britain much to embrace Popery; the mutation would be small; they might retain their present antipathy to the bible; they might hate the advocate of missions, and the itinerant village teacher as cordially as ever; they need not subjugate their passions, or receive with humility and gratitude unmerited pardon from a compassionate and holy Saviour; they might bend the knee, and receive the absolution, leave theology to priests, and live as irreligiously as they could wish to live. Nor does an ignorant Papist do much violence to his feelings by becoming an unbeliever; he has only to shake off his prejudices, for reasons for his faith he does not pos-

sess, he believes because the Church believes, not on account of evidence ; he has only to get rid of his terrors, for love to God his system is not adapted to inspire : he has only to relinquish external forms, for spirituality was before dispensed with. The heart of an ungodly man must be changed, whatever his creed or profession may be, before he will love God, trust in Christ, desire holiness, live by faith, and delight in heavenly objects ; but no renovation of spirit is necessary to convert a worldly man from superstition to infidelity, or from infidelity to compliance with forms and ceremonials.

It is not unjust then to assert that it is the tendency of the Romish system to promote ignorance, irreligion, and infidelity. As lovers of knowledge, of piety, and of scriptural faith, we cannot view with indifference the extension of Popish influence, but must desire its annihilation.

Let us however not forget our own condition while deploring that of others. It is possible that there are some within these walls whose doom will in the day of judgment be less tolerable than that of the inhabitants of Chamberry or of Milan. Woe to the unbelieving cities to which abundant instruction has been afforded !

Peculiar advantages require peculiar proficiency. If death should find us ignorant, irreligious, or unbelieving, we cannot plead in extenuation at the bar of God, that we dwelt in a Popish country, that the Scriptures were locked up from our perusal, and that we were destitute of the means of grace.

Value then, my respected hearers, value your privileges;—not as the miser values his hoard; but as the faithful steward values what is entrusted to his care, employing it in the service of the donor. Value them as the sinking patient values the specific which a skilful physician has prescribed for his relief. Value them as a dying sinner exposed to everlasting vengeance for his depravity and guilt, may justly value tidings of mercy and of sanctifying grace.

“See that ye despise not him that speaketh.” Believe the faithful saying, “He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.” Jesus Christ is preached to you in the gospel as “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” These are blessings which you need; turn your eyes to him, as the friend of sinners and the chosen of the Almighty Father.

And let those who truly prize the Saviour, make him known to others. Use your most strenuous efforts to direct the attention of your fellow-mortals, to the faithful saying which is worthy of all acceptance that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Teach them that "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Teach them that "he his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." What is the tendency of *this* doctrine? Is it to promote ignorance? Far from it! It makes known the counsels of eternal wisdom, displays the character of the unseen, inaccessible Creator, and holds out to our contemplation those exhilarating mysteries into which angelic intelligences desire to look. Does it promote irreligion? No! It demonstrates the intrinsic evil of sin in the magnitude of the compensation; it shews the worth of the soul by exhibiting incarnate Deity as its ransom; it teaches the importance of holiness, by the purity of the victim it reveals, and the greatness of the sufferings it unfolds. Will it promote infidelity? No! It speaks to conscience in a voice so audible that few can

hear it without emotion, unless accustomed to despise it; and it holds forth to the dying transgressor the inviting prospect of eternal life. Its tendency is to excite hope in the disconsolate bosom, by unveiling the compassions of God; to kindle a flame of holy love in the long lost prodigal, by shewing the readiness of the Father to receive him to his arms; to sanctify the heart of the depraved offender, by revealing reasons for repentance founded in the conduct of the offended sovereign; and to lead the proud and impious boaster to adore the riches of unparalleled grace, saying "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." It is adapted to reduce the rebel to obedience; to endue the foolish with the most important wisdom; to make the ruffian kind, and the selfish liberal; to bring honour to God, the bountiful Creator; and to diffuse purity, and peace, humility and gratitude among all his creatures. May we all discern its glories, receive its consolations, and exhibit its effects!

LECTURE VI.

ON THE MEANS WHICH SHOULD BE ADOPTED TO SUBVERT IT.

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”—2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

IT may prepare your minds for the more attentive consideration of that subject to which your thoughts are now solicited; if you will summon to recollection the leading ideas that have been laid before you on former occasions.

These three principles have been exhibited to you, as the fundamental tenets of the Popish system; the first, the insufficiency of the scriptures to be the Christian rule of faith and practice;—the second, the right of the Romish Clergy to supply the deficiency, by authorita-

tively fixing the doctrines to be believed, and the precepts to be observed; the third, the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over all other ministers, and over all christian people.

The representations given to you of Popish *worship* have included the following particulars;—that the public services of the Church are conducted in a language which the people in general do not understand;—that much of the worship is addressed to creatures, rather than to the Creator;—that the worship offered to God is frequently presented in the name of intercessors whom he has not authorized, and in dependence on the merits of sinful mortals;—that the appointments of Jesus Christ are perverted from their original design;—and that the Church of Rome has instituted many ceremonies and sanctioned many practices altogether foreign from the spirit of Christianity.

The system has been described to you as *tyrannical*, because it requires belief without evidence, and even in opposition to the plainest testimony of the senses;—because it withholds from the people the means of acquiring spiritual knowledge; because it demands an exposure of every man's acts and thoughts to an ecclesiastical spy; because it assumes authority to inflict

punishment on persons of all ranks and classes ; and because it undertakes to restrain or castigate, by terror, by imprisonment, and by death, those who disclaim the Christian religion entirely, as Pagans, Jews, and infidels ; and those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord, but do not submit to the decisions of the Bishop of Rome.

The *origin* of this system has been traced in your hearing to a worldly spirit which gained the ascendancy in the Christian Church, and especially took possession of the hearts of its ministers ; which operated in some degree in the earliest ages, but grew to maturity and produced its poisonous fruits in large abundance, soon after the Roman emperor, Constantine, and his successors, took Christianity under their patronage ; till, at length, nearly all Christendom was subjected to the despotism of the clergy.

Its *tendency* has also been examined, and I think it has been rendered evident to you, both from reason and from fact, that it is adapted to promote ignorance, irreligion, and infidelity. Proof has been laid before you, sufficient, I think, to shew that it is calculated to do all that a system of delusion, of hypocrisy, and of priestcraft can, to bring into contempt the religion of

him who died upon the cross, to dishonour God, to loosen the bonds of civil society, to debase the intellect, and to destroy the soul.

Its subversion, you will therefore agree with me, is "a consummation most devoutly to be wished." Yes! it would be joyful intelligence in your estimation were tidings now to arrive that the spell which has so long bound the nations of Europe was dissolved; and that the dense black cloud which has so long intercepted the beams of the sun of righteousness was chased away. Were you to hear the sound of that angelic voice which will one day "cry mightily, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen;" you would not join in the lamentation of its votaries—"Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city!"—but would cheerfully unite with the holy company of apostles and martyrs in the cry, "Alleluia! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments. Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

But ah! no sign appears in heaven or earth of such an alteration. Babylon still "glorifies herself, and lives deliciously;" still she says in her heart "I sit as a queen and am no widow;" still she exercises her potent sway, according to

apostolic prediction, over “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” When we take a view of the wide extent of Popish domination; when we see the devotedness of kings and statesmen to the interests of Rome; when we consider the strong trammels by which it has bound its votaries, and the artful plans by which it has succeeded in causing them to admire their chains, and extol their bondage; we are ready to adopt a prophetic expression of dismay, and say, “Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” With Italy, Spain, Portugal, and South America entirely under his controul; with millions in France, in Germany, and in many other countries, wholly devoted to his interests; with a strong disposition among men in power, in various quarters of the globe, to truckle to his policy, and accept his favours; what can be done to overturn his throne? How would the Pontiff laugh if he knew for what purpose you were this evening assembled! A few hundreds of private persons, in a country town of England, met to listen to an address on the means that should be adopted to subvert his power! ‘Take heed to yourselves,’ might be his sarcastic advice, ‘study the arts of defence, not of attack; they best become you; think how

to secure your present liberties ; consult on the means to preserve your bibles, with licence to read them ; talk not of *subverting* a system which has reigned so many centuries, and is now rousing itself, as from slumber, to waste and to destroy all the tribes of its opponents.' But though he should taunt like Rabshakeh, the daughter of Zion might still shake her head. We need not be dismayed because of his multitudes : " with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles."

The *subversion* of Popery, then—bold as the expression may seem—hopeless as the design may appear, the subversion of Popery is the end at which we aim. The means that should be used for this are the same we would employ to check its progress, or to diminish its influence. But we do not merely wish to confine it to its present territories, or to lessen its present power. What we desire and mean to aim at is its entire annihilation. Soon may the day dawn upon us when it shall only live in the pages of history ! As Hannibal, led to the Carthaginian altar by his father, was made to swear eternal enmity to Rome ; so against Popery we proclaim interminable hostilities ;—hostilities that

shall never cease till every vestige of its footsteps shall be destroyed,—till, to refer to a vision of Ezekiel, every weapon shall be burned, and every bone shall be buried.

But, observe, our quarrel is with Popery, not with Papists. Our question is how to destroy the system, not how to injure the persons by whom it is espoused. As far as I know my heart, there is not one of them, however bigotted, or however base, the meanest slave of superstition, or the most despotic tyrant in the conclave,—there is not one of them for whom I would not consent to die at the conclusion of this discourse, if my death were the necessary and certain means of his salvation. Towards the individuals I would scrupulously cultivate the gentlest dispositions, and preserve the mildest demeanour. I pity their blindness, but their system my soul abhors.

Permit me, then, to say, whatever desire you may have for the destruction of the papal system, nothing should be done to injure its abettors. No penalty should, in my opinion, attach to any article of their creed, or any act of their worship. If their principles should lead them to injure others, for the crimes they perpetrate they should be held responsible; but if they quietly maintain

those principles, they should be exempt from insult and suffering. Human laws should protect the interests of society from aggression; offences against God should be left to the retribution of him against whom they are committed. He is fully able to vindicate his rights, and judges more accurately than we can, the amount of guilt contracted, and the nature of the punishment required. From no part of the present Pope's unchristian letter to his clergy, do I dissent more strongly than from that in which he calls on "Temporal Princes" to take part in the struggle between the Romish Church and its opponents. This is in full accordance with *his* system, but it does not belong to mine. The province of temporal princes is to superintend temporal affairs; the province of ministers of religion to instruct in religious knowledge. If temporal princes had not interfered with religion; and if ministers of religion had not interfered with politics, Popery would never have existed. If temporal princes and ministers of religion were now to confine themselves to their appropriate spheres, Popery would soon slumber quietly in its grave.

Many of you probably expect me to state my sentiments this evening respecting a subject which has long excited public attention; and

which is perhaps more interesting to the general mind at the present time than it has been at any former period ; I mean, the propriety of granting to Roman Catholics a participation in that power which arises from being employed in civil offices. However tempting the opportunity may seem of announcing an opinion on this topic before an auditory so numerous and attentive as yourselves, it is a temptation to which I shall not yield. The question appears to me to be a political rather than a religious question ; and as such I leave it to those whose stations in society render political questions their immediate province. A dissenting minister, in all ordinary cases, injures his usefulness and betrays his trust, when he employs any influence which his ministerial office may yield, to disseminate or enforce political opinions. As a minister of Christ, I think I am acting in character in explaining the genius and attributes of a system which claims to be Christianity. As a minister of Christ, I think I am doing his work, when I shew the injurious tendency and tyrannic spirit of that apostate Church which New Testament prophecy describes. But, as a minister of Christ, I have no business with questions of political expediency : and such a question it appears to me, is the disputed point, whether

Catholics should or should not be reckoned eligible to civil office. If any thing I have advanced in these lectures has been understood to imply a declaration of my opinion on this matter, I beg to say that I did not intend that it should be so construed; and do request that no expression which I have employed, or may employ to-night, may be considered indicative of my feeling on this subject. But, as a minister of Christ, I say, let them not be persecuted, for persecution is opposed to the genius of Christianity:—let them not be restricted from any act of worship, for worship it belongs to God alone to regulate;—let them not be prevented from the free expression of their opinions, for truth needs no assistance from secular authority.

I have, however, some measures to offer to your consideration, which in my judgment ought to be employed against this most pernicious system—measures adapted gradually to undermine, and eventually to destroy it. These I propose, my Christian hearers, for your adoption. Your agency is wanted. If you are sincere in that dislike to Romish superstition and tyranny which you profess, do not hesitate to make use of all fair and Christian means to destroy them.

Permit me, then, to recommend in the first

place, *strenuous exertions to disseminate Scriptural knowledge.*

Error can never be so effectually counteracted as by the promulgation of truth: and as the errors of the Church of Rome are grossly opposed to the letter and spirit of the inspired book; an acquaintance with its contents, and familiarity with its instructions, must be the most effectual preservative against the fallacious claims and pernicious customs of that apostate community. Make known to a man the biblical doctrine of salvation through faith in an adorable Redeemer, who gave himself a ransom for us, and compassionately invites the unworthiest to receive from his hands gratuitous pardon and a holy bias; and if the hearer receive the truth in the love of it, he will not seek forgiveness from papal indulgences, priestly absolutions, and painful penances. Make known the biblical doctrine of Christian liberty; the directions of Jesus Christ to his disciples to regard each other as brethren, call no man master, nor be themselves called Rabbi; the assertions of Paul that the holy scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus; and he who receives this doctrine as divine, will not be likely to embrace the injurious notion of implicit

faith, or to surrender his soul to the authoritative direction of any confessor or any Cardinal. Make known the biblical doctrine of benevolence, charity, forbearance, and humble imitation of the lowly Saviour; teach the importance of his declaration that his kingdom was not of this world, and his prohibition of the use of carnal weapons in the heavenly warfare, and he who sees the evidence and the beauty of these sentiments will not easily be transformed into a familiar of the inquisition. Make known the jealousy which the Most High expresses of all human inventions in his worship; the spirituality of that adoration he requires, and the beautiful simplicity of gospel institutions; and these ideas will effectually caution men against those splendid mockeries of divinity, those imposing ceremonies which the Church of Rome has decreed, but which the Searcher of hearts cannot possibly approve. Oh! if our countrymen who visit the Cathedrals of the Continent, and gaze with amazement at the pomp and majesty of Popish worship, in which every sense is wrought upon, till excitement is mistaken for devotion, were but previously well grounded in these truths,—if they were conversant even in the rudiments of gospel doctrine, and felt its influence on their

hearts,—if they had a lively impression of that jealousy which inspired history, as well as inspired declarations, attributes to Jehovah; the dangers to which their situation exposes them would be greatly lessened,—they would view with widely different feelings the splendour and magnificence of the scene. Instead of admiration, disgust would be excited in their bosoms; and sentiments of pity would take possession of their hearts, while they remembered with compassionate anxiety the consequences which befel the sons of Aaron when they offered “strange fire unto the Lord, which the Lord commanded not.” Such Protestant spectators of Popish worship, seeing the palpable imitation of Pagan rites which it exhibits, would ruminate with deep emotion on the language of the Almighty to the Jews: “Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods, for even their sons and their daughters have they burnt in the fire to their gods. *What thing*

soever I command you observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it." But alas! great numbers of them know but little of that faith to which they make an hereditary claim; its principles they have never studied with any care; and with the language of the holy oracles they have but slight acquaintance. They scarcely know that if we worship God acceptably, we must worship him according to his own appointments; they do not reflect that "our God is a consuming fire." They see what fascinates the imagination, and they are prepared to think favourably of a religion so tasteful and so dignified; and to listen to the sophisms of the first Jesuit who introduces himself to their society! The more ignorant a man is of scriptural religion, the more likely is he to be seduced by the gaudy aspect and flattering promises of Popery: but the more generally the knowledge and love of the pure gospel is diffused, the further will Popery be compelled to retreat into the recesses of its den of darkness.

And it is important, if these views are correct, that all men should be encouraged to fetch their water pure from the heavenly fountain. If you keep them dependant on the Protestant ministry for their knowledge, the step is very short to

dependance on the Popish Clergy. In either case the state is the same, it is a state of dependance; there is only a change of instructors: in either case they are slaves, there is only a change of masters. The way to emancipate them from all spiritual shackles, is to give them the inspired volume, and education to avail themselves of its instruction. Without some education the Bible will be to them no better than “a book that is sealed:” you may say, “read this I pray thee,” but a ready reply will be returned, “I am not learned.” Hence the importance of those exertions made by benevolent persons to teach the children of the poorest to read. No acts of Parliament—no Protestant confederations, can form so strong a barrier against Popery in this country, as the ability of every man to read the scriptures, and the possession of a Bible by every reader. Hence the propriety of those exertions made to establish schools in Ireland;*

* Without any wish to disparage other institutions on behalf of the Irish peasantry, some of which the writer believes to be very excellent, he begs to mention particularly that of which he knows most, and which he thinks has some peculiar claims to public regard;---“The Baptist Society for promoting the Gospel in Ireland.” This society supports ninety-five schools, situated with a few exceptions, in the provinces of Connaught and

and to encourage education throughout the world. It is not however education itself that will afford security against the arts of Romish persuasion; it is rather the biblical knowledge; which education assists men to acquire. The Bible and Popery are two masters whom it is impossible to serve together: they cannot even exist in immediate contact; the Bible will destroy Popery, or Popery will destroy the Bible. The insufficiency of the scriptures and the right of the Romish clergy to rule our faith, the two main pillars of the Romish system, must give way, if the laity read that book which it is admitted came from God, and which expressly declares that it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." I wonder not at the agitation and dismay excited in the conclave, by the operations of that noble institution which offers the scriptures, without note or comment, to all classes in Britain, and to all the nations of the world. It sees in the

Munster: and exclusive of preachers, twenty-six itinerant readers of the scriptures, in the Irish language; who meet with great attention, and have, it is believed, been the means of much good.

free circulation of the scriptures the sure presage of its own downfall. "The roar of the Bull," to borrow the remark of a powerful speaker, "is but the instinctive cry of a beast, goaded to madness by the operations of the Bible Society. One would pity, were it not for the cause in which he is engaged, the writhing agonies of the aged Pontiff; the anxiety and the alarm, the trembling and the astonishment, which, according to his pathetic complaints, the Bible Society has excited. One cannot but be reminded of the characteristic description uttered by Job, of the perpetrators of atrocious crimes. "They know not the light, for the morning is to them even as the shadow of death." But much as they hate the dawn, it is in vain to oppose it; the sun will rise, although they curse its beams; and the deformity of their features, the filth of their garments, and the atrocity of their deeds become visible to all. "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth;" but their deceptions shall not always succeed; their incantations shall fail; their triumphs shall terminate, "and their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was."

But the shrieks of this devouring monster now that it sees before it the instruments of destruc-

tion ; the cries of the crocodile that has been accustomed to range in security, preying on its helpless victims, without fear of retribution, now it sees the ichneumon ; may teach us the part it is expedient for us to act. This Bible Society it dreads ; this Bible Society it execrates ; this Bible Society it declares to be its most dangerous foe ; if then you are zealous Protestants, lend the Bible Society your aid. I believe I have been honoured throughout these lectures with the attention of some who have not yet taken a decided part in favour of that institution. To you, my respected hearers of this class, I beg leave to say recent events make it apparent that in the Bible Society Popery has its most effective and most dreaded antagonist. If no other practical result should accrue from your presence at these discussions, I hope a determination to assist that institution with your contributions and active influence will appear. If it were not an effective agent, would there be this outcry ? If Popes and Cardinals did not think it injurious to their interest would they have issued Bull after Bull against it ? “ We have been truly “ shocked,” says the last Pontiff, in his first attack on this institution, “ at this most crafty device.”—“ We are worn down,” says he, on

another occasion, “with poignant and bitter grief, at hearing of this pernicious design.”—“We exhort you,” says the present Pope, “to turn away your flock by all means from these poisonous pastures.” Let not this display of fear be lost upon you. If this be the part on which they dread attack,—the unfortified side of the citadel,—urge your forces against it. No other effort made by Protestants has ever produced so much terror and rage. If you really dislike Popery, remember that these persons are excellent judges of its interests. Do you wish to impede the progress of Popery at home, encourage the attempt to put the Bible into every hand. Do you wish to diminish its influence abroad, supply the wants of the innumerable Catholics who long to read the holy volume, and are willing, for the pleasure of acquaintance with its contents, to brave the anger of their Priests.

Allow me to recommend in the second place, *Consistent adherence to the principles, the practices, and the spirit of primitive Christianity.*

If you peruse the controversial writings of those who plead for the Roman Catholic faith, you will find two arguments perpetually recurring, which some Protestants cannot read without

a sigh, and others ought not to read without a blush. The first is an appeal to the characters of many professed adherents of the Reformed religion ; the second an allegation of unscriptural customs retained in the Reformed churches. Much exaggeration is employed in urging these topics ; the manner in which they are turned against us is in many cases unfair ; but still we must acknowledge that there is some truth in the representations. They say, there is among us great indifference to religion ; that sabbaths are spent in dissipation by thousands of our countrymen ; that churches are nearly empty which if full would not contain half the population of the district in which they are situated ; that religion is with many professed friends of Reformed principles, a useless name. Who among us can deny these facts ? They say there is little knowledge of the reasons of our faith among men who are bigotted to the party ; that there is little devotion among some whose speculations constitute all their piety ; that there is little humility even among teachers of our doctrines, many of whom are manifestly proud and imperious ; and that the average degree of holiness in a Protestant country is not so eminent as might be expected from our boasted superiority of principle. And who can but mourn the cor-

rectness of these allegations! They are not likely to win us by such arguments to their Church, indeed; but these arguments have weight with casual observers. Catholic travellers *cannot* see among us when they visit our shores such superiority of spirit and conduct as ought to be evinced by the adherents of a reformed—a spiritual system. They *cannot* find in the higher classes of society, the classes best informed on general topics, that predominant devotedness to God which would ratify the supposition that their separation from the Church of Rome was the result of conviction, and a high degree of religious feeling. They *cannot* perceive in the populace, the decorum, the gentleness, the regular observance of sacred ordinances, which should point them out as adherents of the purest of churches, in opposition to the votaries of Antichrist. And it is easy for the Romish formalist to impose upon the ignorant with appearances of devotion; his time consumed in repeating useless pater-nosters, and ave-marias, may readily pass for time employed in communion with God, and excite the high admiration of the unthinking. It is incumbent therefore on every Protestant to consider the tendency of his example; and to “walk worthy of the high vocation with which he is called. This is indeed necessary for his

own sake ;—he should do so from just regard to his own spiritual and eternal welfare ; but it is also necessary for the credit of those holy, heavenly doctrines, which he professes. “ Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Do not let it be thought because you do not confess your sins to a priest that you trifle with transgression. Do not let it be supposed, because you observe not so many ceremonies as they, that you live without private prayer, without family worship, or without regard to public ordinances. Live as Christians. Take the example of the apostles and primitive believers as your guide ; and “ aim by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

Another thing with which they reproach us is a want of consistency. In Protestant Churches, they say, there are rites observed of which there is no more trace in the New Testament than of their forms of devotion. Officers preside, they allege, over Protestant communities, whose names are as unknown to sacred writ as the titles of their dignitaries. Arguments are employed against Dissenters from particular forms of Protestantism, which are but the echo of what they have said against all Dissenters from their

communion. If you deny Church authority they say, how can you justify your own institutions?—If you admit it, how can you vindicate your revolt from us? If you believe scripture to be the Rule of faith and practice, why adopt customs in your worship which it has not suggested?—if you do not esteem it a sufficient guide, you must rely on tradition and on councils, the decisions of which lead you back to our fold.

Now it is my deliberate opinion that any Church which has renounced the authority of the Roman See, even that which Catholic writers have complimented as “the least deform’d because reform’d the least,” is infinitely preferable to the Church of Rome; or to any thing that the Church of Rome ever can be, while it retains its fundamental principles. But then I mourn that a want of consistency should weaken the common cause. I lament that men should be prepared in part to receive the baneful elements of Popery, by being habituated to any thing that makes the slightest approximation to its institutions. I regret that any of my brother Protestants should swerve from the simplicity of gospel worship as practised by the Apostles; because when once they do so, there is no consistent resting-place for them till they arrive at Rome.

To you who are my peculiar charge, Dissenters, Baptists, members of the community assembling for worship here, I now especially address myself. Cleanse yourselves, I beseech you, from every vestige of Popery. If one shred cleaves to you, cast it away, for it is infectious. Take the scripture, and the scripture only, as your rule; conform yourselves in doctrine, and in practice to its dictates. What has been customary in this Church, or in the Churches of the neighbourhood is no rule to you; that is Protestant tradition. What some learned doctor may have written, or some favourite preacher may have taught, is no rule to you; that is implicit faith. What pleases your fancy, what accords with your taste, what imparts pomp and secular dignity to Christian worship is not the legitimate object of your pursuit; the subservience of scriptural directions to human improvements is the vivifying spirit of Popery itself. The only consistent religion for Protestants is the religion of the first Churches. Your strength in the Romish controversy, lies in direct appeal to the Apostolic writings. Train your children to this, and they will be guarded against every Jesuitical artifice. And interpret the word of God according to its plain, unsophisticated meaning.

Remember it is a revelation from him who is infinitely wise, with none of whose sayings it is safe to trifle. In no case venture to put an interpretation on his words which they will not spontaneously yield. Adduce no passage in support of any favourite doctrine, which does not really appear to you to teach it. Reject with pious horror that allegorizing system, which under pretence of extracting a spiritual sense, amuses the fancy and bewilders the understanding, subverts the authority of the venerable record, and accustoms men to regard it as a book of riddles. Renounce "the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending yourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

If for a few moments I may so far deviate from what is usually expedient as to speak a little of myself, I will say that a strong conviction of the importance of this consistency, is the source of what some may deem fastidious scruples. Not that I have already attained it, or am already perfect; but I follow on, not willing to allow myself in any thing of a contrary nature. I wish to avoid most carefully, every thing that might seem like requiring homage from my fellow ser-

vants. I profess no inspiration. I boast no succession from the Apostles. I claim no authority over any of you, but that which arises from your voluntary choice in placing me in the office I sustain;—authority from which you may warrantably withdraw, if you perceive that you can promote the glory of God and the welfare of your souls better, by placing yourselves under the ministry of some different instructor. I ask no man to call me Reverend; if any one thinks fit to give me that title, esteeming it a suitable token of respect, he is at perfect liberty to do so; but I assume it not myself, and am offended with no one because he withholds it. Nor should I feel that I was acting in the spirit of the gospel—though I censure not my brethren who may do so, some of whom I venerate and love, and all of whom have a right to judge for themselves what line of conduct to adopt—yet I should not feel that I was acting in the spirit of the gospel, were I when I address you, to deck myself in silken robes, assuming an appearance which might seem to indicate that I belonged to a superior order. I stand before you as your fellow disciple and your friend; one who has meditated on divine subjects, and proposes his thoughts to your consideration. But I wish no more weight

to be attached to my opinions than arises from the arguments by which they are sustained ; or from the presumption furnished by my character and habits that I have a reason for what I say, and that my judgment accords with truth. Pardon this egotism ; it may be useful. If my practice differs from my words, let them be cited to condemn it. But I have a deep persuasion that the religion of Jesus Christ was never more efficient, never more glorious, than when it appeared in its original simplicity. And it is my earnest desire that these remarks may conduce to impress you all with an abiding and operative conviction of the great importance of consistency both in ministers and people, in adhering to the principles, the practices, and the spirit of primitive Christianity.

In the third place, I beg to recommend *fervent supplications to the Author of all good, that he would put forth his power to destroy that anti-christian system whose subversion we desire.*

His agency is necessary to accomplish the design. If we knew that it would be withheld we might well despair. The walls of Rome are high ; men of great stature guard them ; and if the Lord were not on our side, defeat would be inevitable.

Great dependence is placed by many on the enlightened spirit of the age, and the prevalence of general knowledge. It is impossible, they tell us, that the reign of superstition should be restored; men understand too thoroughly the delusive nature of the system, and love their liberty too well. And true it is, assuredly, that Popery is more likely to gain ascendancy among the ignorant than among the well informed, and that general knowledge is hostile to its conquests. But there are prejudices among those who pique themselves on their philosophy, as well as among the illiterate; and some of those prejudices tend strongly to incline them to the maxims of Rome. One strong prejudice existing among them is contemptuous disbelief of the abilities of the vulgar to judge for themselves the meaning of scripture. Another prejudice among them is the notion that diversity of religious opinions is an evil that it is desirable authority should restrain. Predominant feeling of dislike to investigate religious subjects themselves inclines them to welcome a system which relieves them from the labour, and commits their consciences to professional guides. While antipathy to gospel truth, to holy separation from the world, and to zealous efforts for the conversion of others, disposes

very many to join readily with any party who will repress their evangelical disturbers. So it is, however, whatever be the causes of it, that in the most polished capital of Europe, Popery is regaining its ascendancy. So it is, that the nobles of a neighbouring country who long breathed a Protestant atmosphere, partook of Protestant liberality, and mingled in Protestant society, have returned to their native land, not less attached to Popery than ever, nor less inclined to give it a bigotted support.

But though nothing less than the power of God affords a solid object for confidence, there is no reason to be dispirited. The power of God we are warranted to believe shall be exerted. The rise of Popery was foretold ; so also was its downfall ; and its downfall is ascribed in prophecy to divine intervention. “ The mystery of iniquity,” said the Apostle, “ doth already work ; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth ; and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” In what way its overthrow will be effected, it would perhaps be presumptuous in us to undertake to determine. The highly figurative language of the book of Revelation can

afford but little insight into futurity. The event must explain the vision ; and then it will appear that all came to pass according to divine foreknowledge. Some have thought that the vials of wrath, which must be poured out on the anti-christian world, are filled with temporal calamities, and will produce dreadful wars and desolations. Perhaps, however, we may venture to hope that it will consist with the wisdom and righteousness of God, to inflict on it spiritual rather than corporeal tortures. Perhaps the plagues it is destined to experience are only such as it now endures, from the operations of Christian benevolence, while feeling that its power is waning ; and that its gains and pleasures and dignities are in danger. “ The Lord shall consume it with the spirit of his mouth.” Is not the spirit of his mouth, the energy proceeding from his lips, the word which he has uttered ? May not the dissemination of the word of God be the thing designed ? He shall destroy it with the brightness of his coming.” When does he come in greater splendour than when he comes in mercy, leading rebels captive in the chains of love ? Charity may surely hope that the errors, the wickedness, the abominations of Popery may

be consumed; that Popery itself may languish, faint and expire; that its last adherents shall bewail the low estate of their beloved Church; but that this shall be accomplished, not by violent hands, but by the prevalence of holy principles, of scriptural knowledge, and of christian feelings. But in whatever way its overthrow may be effected, and this we must leave among the secrets of heavenly wisdom, which in due season shall be revealed, *the Lord shall consume it*; its doom is certain; its death warrant is signed by the King of Kings.

This then should stimulate us to pray for its destruction. What God has promised to do, we are authorized to ask. "Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." God of mercy, hasten we entreat thee this glorious consummation! Pity deluded myriads and break their fetters! Attract their confidence and allegiance to thyself! Let the system fall and sink for ever like a millstone in the mighty waters! Let the trumpet sound to announce that the mystery of God is completed! Let the golden age of Christianity be restored! Let piety and peace, and love uni-

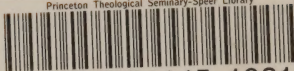
versally prevail ! Let the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and let him reign for ever !

Suggestions such as I have this evening presented to your notice, will not, I am aware, be satisfactory to some. Worldly men love to use worldly weapons, and think that nothing else can be effective. But “ the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” It was not by force that Jesus Christ established his kingdom at first ; nor is it by force that we should now strive to pull his opponents down. Other propositions might perhaps have been made to you with great propriety, but these are the principal that have occurred to me :—strenuous exertions to disseminate scriptural knowledge ;—consistent adherence to the principles, the practices and the spirit of primitive Christianity ;—and fervent supplications to the Author of all good, that he would put forth his power to destroy that antichristian system whose subversion we desire.

Having come to the end of the proposed course, I thank you for the opinion you have expressed by your conduct, that I might say something interesting, on these important topics ; and for the patient attention you have given to my remarks. In parting with you, I pray to God that you may

all be found partakers of that religion which the Apostolic writings inculcate. If any should be inclined to visit this place of worship on subsequent occasions, who have not been accustomed to do so, they will find the doctrines of the Reformation taught ;—doctrines for which our fathers bled, and which are essentially connected with our everlasting welfare. But if we never meet again on earth, may we all be found eventually in “the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven.” And whatever you may forget, that has been urged on your attention, do not fail to remember, that no form of Christianity is so important as its spirit ; that the religion taught in the New Testament, is the only religion authorized by Christ ; and that every blessing which you need as depraved transgressors, may be received through faith in Jesus of Nazareth, but can be enjoyed in no other method.

THE END.



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